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All who see the Truth expressed in these Lectures, and who desire to assist in the Social regeneration so much needed, may communicate with A. C. S., care of the Publisher.

LIFE LECTURES.



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Your Brother in Love and Intelligence

Edw M. Denny

LIFE LECTURES

BY THE

AUTHOR OF

“ALPHA:”

BEING LECTURES ON

THE RELIGION OF LIFE

AS

EXEMPLIFIED

BY

THE MAN JESUS CHRIST.



“This above all,—to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

SHAKESPEARE.

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SYNOPSIS OF THE LECTURES.

TRUTH.

"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?"—JOHN xviii. 38.

ARGUMENT—How to determine what is Truth. The nature of Religious Truth is demonstrated; an estimate of Biblical Truth is given. Obstacles which prevent the attainment of truthful views of the Deity are pointed out, and means suggested for their removal.

WHAT IS EVIL?

"There be many that say, Who will show us any good?"
—PSALMS iv. 6.

ARGUMENT—Croakers and grumblers, whose mouths are for ever filled with suspicious forebodings, are reproved. "The bane of all 'religion' is the setting up of moral evil, human depravity, and the dominion of sin; because involved therein is the practical denial and consequent dethronement of God." So-called evils are incentives for Man to exert himself to overcome unfavourable conditions. Even death introduces Man to the life immortal, and demonstrates the paternal love of God to Man—a love inexhaustible.

CHARITY.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."—I COR. xiii. 1.

ARGUMENT—Charity is *not* the shielding of vice or unrighteous power; nor alms-giving, the erection of hospitals, and the institution of philanthropic enterprises merely; but is the living recognition of the universal brotherhood of the human race—the oneness of the family of mankind—by daily acting out the precept, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also unto them likewise." The practical introduction of this principle would supersede all other benevolent works, which are often cloaks to hide the effects of the gross selfishness of the strong manifested in the cruelty inflicted by them upon the weak. It is "Humanity," or, in Scriptural language, "Love."

POVERTY: ITS EVILS AND MISSION.

"There is one that laboureth and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind; and there is another that is slow, and hath need of help, wanting ability, and full of poverty; yet the eye of the Lord looked upon him for good, and set him up from his low estate; and lifted up his head from misery, so that many that saw it marvelled at him."—ECCLES. XI. 12, 13.

ARGUMENT.—Social distinctions are arbitrary, and are not the result of any partiality of the Deity, but proceed from Man's systematic disobedience of the Divine command—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Suffering follows Man's violation of the laws of his nature—individual and social—and compels him to search for truer conditions of life. Penury is the fruit of social wrong, of which the poor are the victims rather than the authors. It is caused by the almost universal ignorance and sensuality which prevail, and can only be ameliorated slowly by true education and an improved social system.

THE DIVINITY THAT DWELLS IN MAN.

"The wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."—ISA. XXXV. 1.

ARGUMENT.—The greatness and inestimable value of the human soul; its endowments are the attributes of God. By faithful, hopeful, persevering exercise of our faculties, the wilderness of human life may be made to blossom as the rose. A knowledge of our soul-nature is our first duty; and a review of its divine capabilities, instead of inflating us with pride, ought to melt us with love and gratitude to the good Father, God, who has bestowed upon us such spiritual wealth.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

"Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the Truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded

the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”—2 COR. iv. 1—4.

ARGUMENT.—The ecclesiasticisms of to-day, unfit to live, afraid to die, are being left behind in the march of intellect. The Church of the future will teach men all they require to know, that they may fulfil life's obligations satisfactorily. It must be based upon Reason; worship a God of perfect justice; and have brotherly love, in the form of equal justice to all, as its aim: a cosmopolitan communion, a refuge for the infidel, an educated working Church for an educated working world.

“STAND UP; I MYSELF ALSO AM A MAN.”

—ACTS x. 26.

ARGUMENT.—The bowing down before human Teachers is degrading. Truth only is to be worshipped. The Divine Spirit is the source of Man's every good and perfect gift; true religion is the manifestation of these. Man's nature, coming from God, is essentially good. What constitutes true Manhood is portrayed, and also that which is derogatory thereto.

THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*”—PROV. xxii. 6.

ARGUMENT.—What is called “Sin” is *nominal only*, it being the necessary consequence of bad training or absolute neglect. *Real* Sin lies at the door of those who, having the power to guide their fellow creatures in the right way, abuse that power by falsely using, or neglecting to use it. From ignorance or wilfully, soul-degrading dogmas are taught by “religious” teachers as the all of religion, to the neglect of the everyday practical Religion of Love taught and lived by Christ. Universal Love to be attained by training the children of all to do to others as they would others should do to them.

TRUST IN GOD.

“*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*”—PSALMS xxvii. 1.

ARGUMENT.—The unchangeableness of Nature's method of working is pointed out as a reflex of God's mind. We must *know* God to trust Him. Has God revealed himself to Man—and how? The soul, the mirror of Deity. The source of all truth is *within* Man, and its precious treasures are revealed to all earnest seekers.

SELF-TRUST.

"By the grace of God I am what I am," &c.—I COR. XV. 10.

ARGUMENT.—Self-reliance depends upon self-knowledge. The relationship between God and Man defined, inducing self-trust. St. Paul a noble instance of self-trust. All acts which ennoble Man proceed from self-trust; and this attribute should be assiduously cultivated.

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."—PROV. xii. 10. Or, as this passage might be rendered—"A righteous man is merciful to his beast."

ARGUMENT.—True manliness and righteousness are convertible terms, and constitute the "Christian," or follower of the natural Religion of Love. Priestly ordination an imposition. Righteous acts are shown in doing right for righteousness' sake, and originate in a love of goodness and truth.

THY KINGDOM COME.

"In the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of the 6th chapter of the gospel of Jesus as rendered by the Evangelist Matthew, it is written—"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him. After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

ARGUMENT.—The nature of prayer in general is discussed, and this prayer in particular. Prayer is a pledge that we will strive to attain what we desire. Unanswered prayers the result of "asking" only, and not *doing*: Askers must be Doers. The meaning of the Kingdom of God on earth. How to attain it.

WHAT IS MAN?

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"—PSALMS viii. 4.

ARGUMENT.—Man is seen by the Psalmist to be next in order to Angels, and crowned with glory and honour. The causes of his vices and degradation are pointed out, also the errors of theology respecting the nature of Man. The religious teachings of Jesus contrasted with those of Moses and Mohammed. Man is not at enmity with God. Orthodox dogmas are degrading. "Prove all things," especially religious teachings, and hold fast to truth, wherever found.

THE "ONE THING" DESIRED BY THE
PSALMIST.

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."—PSALMS xxvii. 4.

ARGUMENT.—The character of Jesus embraces universal greatness. David desired goodness for himself, but Jesus for all humanity. The true preacher is his disciple, and his topic is as boundless as the love and goodness of his Master. The want of the world's theologic religion is an unselfish God to vitalise it. The worship of Christendom is toward the Golden Calf, and goodness and truth are less valued than rank and possessions. The practical recognition that ALL have *equal rights* should be the "one thing" striven for by ALL.

PURE RELIGION.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep yourself unspotted from the world."—JAMES i. 27.

ARGUMENT.—God's highest gifts to man are the divine attributes of the human soul, and the most holy place of worship is *within* man. To cultivate the highest powers of his nature, and harmonise them with the lower; and to reverence God by acts of life-long love to all his creatures, is the work of "Pure Religion."

PHILOSOPHY.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy."—COL. ii. 8.

ARGUMENT.—Philosophy means a system of truth which shows us all we need, what we are, and what we should be, and is synonymous with true religion. True philosophy has a rational basis and a righteous end, and is not a superstructure built upon injustice, blind credulity, opinion, and the surmises of ignorance and cupidity, such as the spurious philosophy referred to by the Apostle. Paul was a reasoner, and illustrated the prime importance of reason in matters of religion. The teachings of the churches are tested. A belief in fables and dogmas is degrading. Universal education recommended. A progressive immortality is the destiny of man.

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

"The disciples came unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and placed him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye become converted as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. xviii. 1—4.

ARGUMENT.—Childhood is the *type* of heaven, not its reality. In the child's effort to attain knowledge, its happy state of unconscious innocence ceases; but it should be succeeded by the consciously intelligent happiness of maturer age. The child-state of innocence was ever-present in Jesus, as he lived in harmony with the ever-welling spring of knowledge within him. His miraculous birth is discussed. Sin and distortion of character proceed mainly from false training and superstitious religious teachings.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—JOHN viii. 32.

ARGUMENT.—The rock on which this freedom must be built is a recognition of the law that whatever is necessary and desirable for one is also necessary for all men. True freedom is liberty to seek out the truth and practise it. Unless based upon truth and right, liberty becomes license. Those teachers of a sentimental liberty and irrational piety who consider the Truth beyond Man's power of attainment are unfit to teach, for they enslave the minds of the people with their specious arguments.

ELECTION AND GRACE.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure."—PHILIPPIANS ii. 12, 13.

ARGUMENT.—The Calvinistic doctrines of Election and Salvation are examined, and their absurdities exposed. The theology which represents a capricious and revengeful God, a corrupt and reprobate humanity, eternal torments, and a scheme of atonement for the human race, is the fatal bar to that righteous life, and Spiritual growth, by which—and only so—heavenly happiness can be attained. God hath implanted in Man the desire for happiness, and given him Reason, whereby he may know and observe His laws, and thus, by the exercise of his own will, "work out his own salvation."

TIME.

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hands to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be Time no longer."—REV. x. 5, 6.

ARGUMENT.—Much time is misspent in idleness and sensual pleasures—hence the importance of our lives being regulated by intellect. The proper use of time is the attainment of wisdom and the practice of goodness. Religionists make these duties a gloomy penance, and in place of a *living* Religion, substitute rites and forms. Jesus went to the temple to teach, not to worship, and at Church people should be taught, and learn, life's duties, for practice at all times. Jesus made religion loveable, pleasant, and beautiful; he harmonised it with human nature.

SIN.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin."—JOHN xv. 22.

ARGUMENT.—Being endowed with intelligence and freedom of action, man is capable of sinning. Ignorance cannot sin, but may commit wrong. Sin is man's shame, but it is his glory that he is liable to it, otherwise he would be no better than the brutes. This liability relates man to all that is glorious and good. The greater the enlightenment, the greater the responsibility. The Church theory of sin is false, and Satan is a myth. Sin proceeds from the over-activity and perversion of the sensual faculties. It is not an offence against God, nor is He angry with the sinner. The sinner offends against himself, even in injuring his neighbour, and his degradation and consequent punishment are his means of salvation. There is no atonement for sin; it can only be overcome by Knowledge and Spiritual progression, the result of living in accordance with Knowledge.

LAW THE REGENERATOR.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—GALATIANS vi. 7.

ARGUMENT.—Sacrifice does not mean propitiation for sin, but honour to God and obedience to His law. Upright motives and actions are the only acceptable sacrifices. The notion of vicarious sacrifice is the offspring of Ignorance and Selfishness, as false as it is deadly to the reign of justice among men.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

"We spend our years as a tale that is told."—PSALM xc. 9.

ARGUMENT.—A New Year's sermon. Each one should frequently review his life, and compel conformity to his highest model of character, and to the known laws of God. Men engrave their peculiarities on their inner natures, as well as on their faces, and thus are working out for themselves hideousness or beauty for the future. The "recording angel" exists *within us*.

GOD IS NOT MOCKED.

"Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."

—GALATIANS v. 13, 14, 15.

ARGUMENT.—Man by his actions places himself on a plane of life which brings to him an appropriate reward for all his works. As the creature of Causation, man is amenable to law, and by the cultivation and exercise of the higher attributes of his being, he may continually attain to a more spiritual enjoyment of existence.

THE UNCHRISTIAN CHARACTER OF RICHES.

"And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

—1ST TIMOTHY vi. 8.

ARGUMENT.—The evils resulting both to individuals and the State from an intense pursuit of wealth are shown, and specious arguments in support of it disposed of. The Churches are condemned for their apathy in the matter, and for placing their shortcomings to the account of the "devil." Pregnant instances are cited in proof of both the impotency of riches, and the falseness of the doctrine of "human depravity."

PEACE.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."—ROM. vii. 18.

ARGUMENT.—The horrors of War are depicted and contrasted with Peace—the golden chain that binds man to Deity, and which can only exist when truth triumphs and man is just. Selfishness, love of power, and sensual ease, breed injustice; and the system of

vicarious atonement perpetuates crime. Thieving and crime are a form of war proceeding from social injustice. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and the time is at hand when the earth and its fulness—the source of the people's subsistence—will no longer be withheld from them by the force or fraud of the powerful few. To hasten this time the people should be truly educated.

RELIGION CONSISTS IN ACTION.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."—MATT. vii. 21.

ARGUMENT.—True religion declared to consist in the every-day practice of unostentatious and disinterested *acts* of benevolence, and in the furtherance of all works of progress, and in the individual soul-culture of all. Those who have "retired" from the world of strife, thinking to enjoy religion in comfort, are unmanly and cowardly. Vindictive punishment is shown to be productive of great evil, and entirely opposed to the reformatory and loving spirit of Christianity. Atheism is the natural recoil from the vengeful God of Theology.

THE MILLENNIUM, AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

"They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."—MICAH iv. 4.

ARGUMENT—A happy people is a religious people. The result of Solomon's reign is cited to show that the rulers and teachers of the people are responsible for the state of society. Reason and Religion should be united, and thus destroy sectarianism. The people should be taught the laws of existence and the principles of justice. If the ministers of religion knew their duty, and taught the Truth, poverty, crime, ignorance, and unhappiness would be banished from the earth.

PREFACE.

RELIGION, as hitherto presented by the world, and evidenced by its many contending sects, rests, not upon the logical sequence of a positive basic truth, but upon *opinion*—ultimating chiefly in mere forms and ceremonies; and it follows that, so long as it shall continue to do so, error, and consequent dissensions and wrong-doing, must prevail: the chief cause thereof being erroneous conceptions of the nature of God and Man. Having this knowledge*—the self-elucidating principle of true Social and Religious action—the relations, requirements, and duties of humanity are clearly seen in all their simple unity and beauty.

In the Series of Lectures, illustrating texts of Scripture, of which this volume consists—written by their late author for delivery on certain occasions, rather than for publication—the light of this primary principle is applied to the general conduct of life—presenting that universal harmony and

* See “ALPHA,” by the same author. London: published by Jas. Burns, 15 Southampton Row, Holborn.

joyous state of progressive being, which an *ever-living practice* in unison with the laws of Spiritual life can alone impart.

The responsibility of publishing the names of certain well-known writers referred to, as representative teachers, in these Lectures, rests with the present editor.

A. C. S.

T R U T H.

“Pilate saith unto him, What is Truth?”—JOHN xviii. 38.

YOU know, my friends, to whom Pilate addressed this question. Jesus had said to Pilate—“To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world—That I should bear witness to the truth. Pilate saith unto him, What is Truth?”

Pilate's question is a most comprehensive one: it includes moral truth; religious truth; historical truth; scientific truth; *all* truth. Jesus spoke of a *particular* truth, and not of truth in its widest or most general signification. He alluded to what is generally understood as Moral and Religious truth. It was on religious grounds that he had been arraigned before Pilate, and the expression, “*the* truth” (to which he said he came into the world to bear witness), refers to the particular relationship between God and man, and the duties which grow out of this relationship, which, when proved and established to the satisfaction of the world, must become *the basis of the world's Religion*; not the Religion of a particular *nation*, the descendants of a particular family; but *the religion of all men as soon as all men shall be fully convinced of its Truth*. The Jews perceived

as much : it was new and "strange doctrine" to them : they deemed it blasphemous, and resented it accordingly. I refer more especially to the Jewish *Priesthood*—the "most reverend" and the "right reverend Fathers in God" of that day. So they "protested;" and voted the Reformer "dangerous;" and dubbed him "heretic;" and crucified him; and, of course, hoped they had thereby *crushed* these "strange doctrines" of his (this *truth* which wasn't *their* truth) *for ever*. But in this they were mistaken. More than eighteen centuries have passed away; and, side by side with the law and gospel of the Jews—in the same volume,—distributed over the whole earth—stand the law and the gospel of Jesus. Millions of men and women are reading both, judging of both, and making their election between them; but Judaism is all but extinct; whilst, in some form or other, the religion of Jesus, under the name of Christianity, is extending itself over the length and breadth of the earth, and promises to become *universal*.

People have looked at the *character* of the GOD of whom *Moses* testified, and at the *character* of the GOD of whom *Jesus* bore witness, and have unhesitatingly preferred the *latter*. Why? Because their very natures have shrunk from believing that the character given by Moses of the Almighty Creator of Heaven and Earth is a *just* and *true* character; whilst they have felt that the character of God, whom Jesus presents to us as the Universal Father, comes nearer to the *absolute Truth*. It is a law of our intellectual nature that, wherever men are free to judge between two or more proposals made to them, they must prefer the one they think the *truest* and the *best*. Ask any man whether *Wrong*

or Right should be preferred? He must answer, Right!—whether a man ought to do Good or to do Evil? He must answer, GOOD!—whether Falsehood is to be preferred or Truth? He must answer, TRUTH! This is an experiment you can all try on yourselves. Ask yourselves, honestly, any of these questions, or any similar ones (all of which questions pertain to Religion and Morality), and you are sure to obtain a true and honest answer. Why? Because it is your truth-loving Nature that answers; in other words, it is the Good and Holy *God* (who gave you that Nature) *that answers these questions for you*; therefore, in all such cases, if you *seek* honestly, you shall *find*: if you honestly “knock at the gate of Righteousness, it shall be opened unto you.” Be but *honest: don't prevaricate;—and here you will get the TRUTH—the Truth which lies at the bottom of all Morality and all Religion. The Good, the Right, the True are dear to us—are, in short, part of us; and we must prefer them: and (in all cases where we are free to choose) we always choose that which (to the best of our judgment) is the best.*

A large portion of mankind has been reading the Bible, and making its election between Judaism and Christianity—between the God about whom Moses wrote and taught, and the God of whom Jesus bore witness; and, as I have already said, *the bulk of men unmistakably prefer the latter—the All-loving Father revealed by Jesus, and not the implacable and cruel Jehovah of the Jews. Thus, we perceive, the real question on which Jesus was arraigned before Pilate by the Jewish priesthood is gradually and unmistakably being settled by the universal verdict of Humanity.*

We perceive, *also*, that *the answer* to Pilate's question, *What is Truth?* is by the same slow process, and by the same tribunal, in a fair way of being settled *too*. That which *cliques* and *colleges*, and learned pundits, clerical and lay, *cannot* settle, is sure, in the long run, to be settled by *the crowd*. "Vox populi, vox dei," is an ancient maxim ; that is, "The voice of the people is the voice of God ;" and the more we know about God and about Humanity, the more we become convinced that this maxim *is a veritable truth*. Not that the voice of the majority of the people, *at any particular period* (especially at the period when any great question is first propounded) is *always*, or, indeed, *ever Right*. But, my friends, because the *natural tendency* of the Human mind is *always* towards the *Good*, the *Right*, the *True*, it is *certain* that the right determination must be arrived at by the universal verdict of Humanity at last. So, whilst wrangling combatants and dogmatists and mystics *mainly disguise and obscure Truth*, *Time* unveils this radiant Angel, this desire and *want* of man, this *attribute of DEITY* ; and *lo ! it is very, very beautiful* ; and we *enthron*e it in our *souls* ; and thence feel ourselves more nearly related to the Lord of Heaven as a *consequence* of the dear possession. We *love TRUTH*, and thence perceive *that God is Truth !* In our heart of hearts we love *Goodness*, and thence perceive that *God is GOODNESS !* We love *Mercy*, and thence perceive that *God is MERCY !* In the depths of our being we love *JUSTICE*, and thence perceive that *GOD IS INFINITELY JUST, AND MERCIFUL, AND GOOD, AND TRUE !*

We have only to be *faithful* to this light, *to be what God designed we should be*. We have only to remember *what we*

are; and how God teaches us; and what the voice of God in our souls is ever telling us; to perceive all that is true concerning Him, and all that is needful for OURSELVES. We have only to remember all this to perceive that what the Prophet Micah tells us is literally and absolutely true. He says, "God hath showed thee, O man, what is good." "The grass withereth," says another of these men of God, "the flowers fade: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." THE WORD OF OUR GOD! This reminds me of another question which the voice of God, speaking through humanity, is deciding, and will ultimately decide. The watch-call—the battle-cry of what is called Evangelism, is ever this—"The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." Well, we accept the challenge! To-day our subject is *Truth—Religious and Moral Truth*; therefore, without any uncharitable reflection on the maintainers of this proposition, we may ask (indeed it is our duty to ask)—"Is the whole Bible the word of God?—the whole word of God?—in other words, Is every statement, every word in the Bible true? and, if true, is it the whole truth?" To reply, No! to this question, in either of its forms, is to expose ourselves to be denounced as Infidels and Heretics by a whole legion of Zealots who deem themselves to be the peculiar favourites of him they call their "Lord." Well, be it so! We will say with the sweet Psalmist of Israel,—

"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"

Or with the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews,—

"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

My friends, of all the Books I have ever seen, or know of, there is no book we could so ill spare as the Bible ; no book the loss of which would be so great a calamity to the world. I wish it were in every man's hand, and that every man knew *how to read it*. But when it is remembered that the Bible contains statements in reference to the character of God which never yet found an honest echo in the hearts or judgments of humanity, it is certain that many of its statements cannot be true. Again, if Christianity is true, Judaism is not true, and never was true ; and consequently much of the teaching of Moses (the whole saddening and savage record of which is in the Bible) **MUST BE FALSE**. *It is plain therefore, that the whole Bible is not the word of God.* I do not wish a word of it expunged ; but I do wish that every soul on earth aided by that lamp of Truth which God has lighted up within him, could *distinguish for himself the false portions from the true*. Truth suffers nothing, but rather gains, by its proximity to Falsehood ; once we are able to perceive the difference between them. There are *nice* distinctions between Truth and Error ; and there are *broad* distinctions which are open and obvious to every honest mind. Take, for instance, the 28th Chapter of Deuteronomy, beginning at the 15th verse ; which verse is as follows :—" But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee." Then follow the **CURSES** which occupy the fifty-two remaining verses of the chapter ; forming altogether a Curse so dreadfully horrible, so cold-

bloodedly minute and malignant that one would think some *Demon* must have conceived it, and not a *Man*; and yet it is *Moses* who promulgates it in the name of GOD!

It is not possible that *Moses* was commissioned of God to promulgate this *Curse*; and every one who reads it will *feel* that it is not possible. *Here*, the distinction between the false and the true is *broad* enough, and few will hesitate to pronounce—what *all must feel*—that *this* portion (at least) of the sacred volume [which elsewhere exhorts us to *bless*, even our enemies, and not to *curse* them] *cannot be a portion of God's word; nor the supposition that He commissioned Moses to impute it to him true.* I doubt if there be even one intelligent Jew in the world, who would now endorse this curse of their ancient Law-giver, and hold it to be a portion of the Word of God. Yet, my friends, not many years since (as most of you are aware) Eight thousand clergymen came forward, by their representatives, to urge their Metropolitan to prosecute and degrade one of their brethren for publishing his conviction, that there are statements in the Bible inconsistent with a Christian's notion of Truth, and therefore unworthy of being attributed to God! Six other men, five of them clergymen, were also included in this public condemnation by their brethren for daring to differ with them on other points connected with the interpretation of the Scriptures, and the Church of England's cut-and-dried notions of Truth. Are these Eight thousand persecuting clergymen honest? or is it really so difficult a matter to come to a knowledge of the Truth?

My friends, did we not see just now that Amos the prophet is right in this great saying of his,—“God hath

declared unto man what is His thought"? Did we not see that the Prophet Micah was right in this declaration of his,—“*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good*”? giving us this explanation in proof of it,—“For what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Do not our souls *respond* to the Prophet? does not our calm judgment declare that these grandly simple words are true? For what *can* God require of us but this? Has not *Jesus*, who came into the world to bear witness to the truth, told us in other words, and if possible in plainer ones, *exactly the same thing*?—Reducing the ten great precepts of Moses into two, he says, as you all know, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and Him only shalt thou serve: This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Micah says, what more doth God require of thee? and the Apostles in sundry places, and in all manner of ways directly assert the same thing. All these, the truth loving principle within us moves responsive to; counsels us to obey; and assures us (with an authority not our own) that they are holy, just, and true.

It is because of this tendency of our souls towards the good, and the right, and the true, that I said just now, “The voice of the People is the voice of God”: and I assert further, that however long the world has to wait for it, it is to a knowledge of this fact that the wrangling impeders of progress, and the combatants about formularies of Religion *must* come, before a rational solution, can be

arrived at, of Pilate's question, what is Truth? It will be however arrived at sometime; and the knowledge will be *universal*; and unchristian wranglings about the thousand and one things which have nothing to do with Religion, will cease; and the hymnings of the Angels over Bethany, "Glory be to God in the highest: peace on earth: and good will towards men," will be the song of a sinless people.

We shall not see this happy time; nor our *children*; nor our *children's children*:—*but it will come!*—Enough for us that we can take up the Bible, and find God in it; that we can look into our consciences and commune with Him there; that we can gaze into the starry heavens and recognise his *Glory*; that we can direct our view over the variegated landscape and see evidences of his *Goodness*; and that by patiently watching the operation of His Spirit within us, we can discover the beautiful beginnings, and the benevolent tendency, of his *Truth*. Yes, my friends, Truth—it I read the *Bible* aright, and *Nature* aright, and *Myself* aright—Truth is the voice of God speaking through Humanity; it is God's own Law of human progress working in the human Soul; or, in another sense (slightly different though essentially the same), it is the ascertained and accumulated *results* of that Law, which works unceasingly;—the accumulated *utterances* of that voice whose low whisperings are only just audible to our *individual* consciences; but which grow loud as their organ-like harmonies sweep over the awakening ages, and make music among the echoes of the pillar'd and vaulted galleries of Time.

If true to our God; if true to the Nature which God has

given us; if true to our own honest thought; *there is no difficulty, my dear friends, about Truth.* As *Christians, as disciples of him who came into the world to bear witness to the Truth,* our difficulty lies in *another direction, and is of another kind.* Knowledge enough to be religious men and women is easy of attainment, *once we see the way and honestly determine to use the means.* The whole resolves itself into *self-knowledge.* We may be shut out from books; but we cannot be shut out from ourselves. We may, by poverty, and toil, and by a multitude of other painful and chilling circumstances, be shut out from *social and congenial intercourse with the wisest and the best of our fellow men;* but we cannot (unless by our own fault) *be shut out from intercourse with God:* and from the secret recesses of our nature, *thus does He teach us our Christian duty;*—Would you willingly be a slave?—a mere chattel, to be bought and sold?—to be owned and used, at the despotic will of a man like yourself,—a human master?—Then, whatever your power, and whatever the temptation, do not even *wish* to possess a slave, or to exercise a despotic will over any of your fellow creatures. Slavery is a crime against Nature; an abomination; a heinous sin. Have thou nothing to do with it: yield it neither countenance nor encouragement;—but use all means, except violent means, according to the extent of your influence and ability, to crush the abomination wherever it exists, to exterminate this “inhumanity of man to man” from all the earth for ever.

Do you not feel within you a natural aversion to *injustice,* of any kind, *when offered to yourself?*—Then, *never* commit an act of injustice to another. Never countenance it; nor

encourage it ; but do what you can to repress and banish it from among men. All injustice, all wrong-doing, results in Evil. All *intentional* wrong-doing is Sin. Avoid it if you would be happy. Would you, being wise, and full of happiness-giving knowledge, willingly elect to be ignorant ?—Then, do all you can to remove the evil and unhappiness of Ignorance (fear not the consequences ! they *must* be good !) from *all men the wide world through*. *Do it* if you would exterminate evil. *Do it* if you would avoid the unhappiness of sin ; for it is written, “ He who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is Sin ” ; *do it* if you would grow more and more like unto God. Would you, being *rich in mere worldly goods*, *willingly* exchange conditions with your brother there—who toils daily from sun-rise to sun-set, and *is still poor* ? Then do what you can to lighten the burdens, and ameliorate the condition, of the poor man ; and without sinking lower in anything in which you are above him, endeavour to *raise him, and his class everywhere, to an eminence at least equal to your own*. *Do it* if you would, in the next world, avoid self-condemnation. *Do it* if in Heaven, you would join, without shame, the unselfish ; and mingle in its “ many mansions,” with the “ pure in heart,” and the Christ-like, and the Just.

I will not, my friends, pursue any further the long list of great lessons which even the most selfish side of man’s nature could teach him would he but honestly enter into this self-examination in the full consciousness that, if true to himself, the resolutions he *must* arrive at, would be in harmony, and at *one-ment* with the justice and the clearly expressed will of God. *To know our duty is easy enough.*

To do it is the difficulty. Alas! this is scarcely to be thought of. The whole system of things, ecclesiastical and civil, is dead against it. So we do perhaps the best thing we can;—we *pray* to be rid of the evils which partly we cannot, and partly we will not, *prevent*. (Of course, my friends, these observations are *general*.) Instead of doing *justice* we dole out alms. Instead of *preventing* crime we *punish* it. Instead of educating *all* the children, the most *destitute* have to pick up their education—and thus qualify for the hulks and the penitentiaries *in the street*. Nor is our system of training (where training is given) of the character best calculated to sharpen the pupil's perception of Truth. From our humblest schools to our Universities, we begin with trammelling the free soul by catechisms and creeds, articles and canons, and by all the artillery that can be brought to bear upon it, so as to hold it in bondage. Then we proceed to impart our one-sided instruction; shutting out the soul from *itself* on the wicked plea that *ITSELF is the very Devil*; in short (to illustrate my meaning by a very homely figure) we first *muzzle the understanding*, and then *turn it out to graze*.

We thus surround ourselves with evils and perils innumerable until the *wisest* get bewildered, and the *best* almost despair,—and then, the *cunning* (by way of pretext) and the *simple* (through want of wit) shift the odium of this state of things on Providence; and ask us, with an air of triumph—shaking their chains as they ask it—*What is truth?*—a question, my friends, which is never answered until these chains are broken. But *then*, if we succeed in finding the sacred object of our search, we find, not Truth only, but the

infinite Father!—Humanity's ever adorable God! We have *then* the touchstone by which we can discover His Truth in the Bible; His Truth in universal Nature; His Truth in the hitherto obscure recesses of our own immortal souls.

Only a few words more. I have *said*—and if I have made myself understood, I hope I may say I have *proved* it—that, as disciples of Jesus, and as sons and daughters of God, to *know* our duty is *easy enough*: but that to *do* our duty is the difficulty; and I have glanced at the obstacles which make this difficulty almost altogether *insurmountable to us*. This is a saddening thought: and I must not take my leave of you without pointing to the consolation. The obstacles I chiefly dwelt on are those caused by the trammels the young mind is hampered with in the process of its Education. It is a *consolation* to think that so far as an *exception* to this censure can be claimed by any religious body, the credit of it is due to the Unitarians. It is equally consoling to perceive that the schisms which are so frequently occurring among other bodies of Christians are nearly all of them in the direction of Unitarianism; and that the seven men (previously alluded to), members of the Church of England, whose recently published opinions in the work, called “Essays and Reviews,” really hold (or very nearly) the views we hold, and are in reality Unitarians. These, and many similar facts, show that we are doing *something*, if not all we can, to *remove the obstacles which stand in the way of rational, simple, practical, Christianity*. Other obstacles are *political* and *social*: and these, in our time, will be, *must* be, insurmountable. But God is just.

He does not expect more of his creatures than his creatures have the strength and ability to perform. Heaven is a *possibility* for *us all*, although to perform our Christian duties to the letter is, at present, an *impossibility*: and this is, indeed, a consolation. *Sincerity* is, however, required of us; and *daily effort* to uphold the Truth; and, according to our ability and means, to aid in the dissemination of *this same Truth* to all mankind. We must be *tolerant*; but we must be *true*. There is but *one* truth; and but *one way* to it. The finger-post of *worldly interest* is no safe guide to Truth. *Conscience* is *blind of one eye*, and cannot see *well* with the other. It is *near-sighted*, and *won't wear spectacles*. If it puts on a pair for show, it first takes the glasses out. It doesn't want to see *far beyond itself*, because, in truth, it can't afford it. It is a respectable looking cheat, and no safe guide to that Religion which (regardless of all worldly considerations) *does Right from the pure love of Right*. There is, then, but *one* TRUTH—and God is its author: and but *one way* to it—and Jesus points it out: and but *one proof* of it,—and this is the *unwarped*, the unsophisticated, *voice of God speaking through the human understanding*. Therefore, knowing how *Wrong* and *Falsehood* have crept into the world, viz. by means of false teaching, *we must be tolerant of Error*: but knowing also what *Truth* and *true Religion* are, God requires of us that we shall be *faithful* to our Light, and tend it, and keep it burning, and disseminate it all we can, *that it might ultimately illuminate the world*.

This is the duty which takes the place of those other duties we can only in part perform. Let us zealously perform this duty;—and let our willingness to perform the higher

duties—the strict letter of the Law—be exhibited in *right feeling*; and in *charitable thoughts*; and in *kind help*; and *benevolent wishes*; and *right intentions*; and *honourable dealings*, throughout our intercourse with our neighbours, and the world. Let our *piety*, and *love of God*, be made manifest in *the cheerfulness of our countenances*, and in *the beauty of our lives*. GOODNESS, my dear friends, *when genuine*, beams out in every *act*, and *word*, and *look*, of its possessor: it is welcome everywhere; it is never out of place; never out of season; never obtrusive; never absent; yet never wished away. It is that sunshine of the soul which warms and gilds, and beautifies, whatever else it shines upon. It is that power which abashes and disarms “self-righteous” accusers, and converts them into *Men*; whilst it does much to reclaim the *erring* from their errors by bidding them “Go and sin no more.”

If this divine attribute of the God we would serve and honour be, at present, an impossible attainment (as it is!) we can all love it, and wear its raiment, and do *something* to bring about the time when it shall find a home on earth, an abiding place among men. Let us, then, cultivate a love of it, and practice it as far as we can; and though, through no fault of ours, our *doings* must fall short of our *knowings*, we need not fear but that at the final reckoning, we shall each of us be welcomed into the future life by this greeting from our Elder Brother who has gone before,—“Well done thou good and faithful servant”! Thou hast been faithful under many difficulties and temptations. “Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.”

WHAT IS EVIL?

"There be many that say, who will show us any good?"—Ps. iv. 6.

MY FRIENDS, there is scarcely any state of mind more prolific of evil than that which is ever prompting the question, "Who will show us any good."

Of this querulous class of mind is the habitual grumbler to whom everything is a trouble; all is wrong; nothing right. He speaks ill of everything and everybody—his neighbour, his master, his servant, the season, the weather, the crops. It is a *habit* with him and he frequently—perhaps generally—speaks worse than he thinks.

To the same class of minds belong the envious, and the suspicious, and the foreboders of evil. I mention these in passing as being persons incapable of anything in the shape of happiness save only that vitiated form of it which grows out of the indulgence of a pernicious habit. It is almost needless to say that among such perverse thinkers there can be but little perception of harmony, and beauty, and order, in the natural world; and a very faint sense of Morality and Religion. There can be but little love of our neighbours; little reverence towards God. But the persons spoken of by the Psalmist, although belonging to this querulous and

discontented class, are thinkers who, from the universality of their censure, claim to be considered philosophers, and challenge, not only *Man*, but the Universe and its Creator—to show them any Good. There is misery and disorder and evil everywhere (say they); and if the Universe is not an accident, it is certainly the work of a Demon, or it is a huge mistake, for in all creation "Who will show us any Good"? These men are bold speculators—*fool-hardy*, rather shallow, presumptuous and rash. David, King of Israel, tells us there were "many" such in his day. Yes! among the people claiming to be the "chosen" of Jehovah, there were "many" who doubted concerning the providence of God, or who denied his goodness, or arraigned his justice, or dared to set limits to his powers. There have been "many" in all preceding times: there are "many" now. The existence of evil, and by what accident or arrangement it got into the world, has been the favourite problem of the philosophers (lay and clerical) for several thousand years. It did not escape Moses, who, (as I believe) invented a fable to account for it. It was discussed, but not settled, by the subtlest of the Greeks. It has been the inexhaustible thesis of the Schools of a far later day. It is an open question among the boldest thinkers of the present time. It has only been settled—and that on the hypothesis of Moses—by the Christian church. To those who understand the mystery involved in the explanation given by Moses, or who, without understanding, feel themselves constrained to believe it, the thing is simple enough. To all others it is an enigma still. But an inquiring spirit is one thing: a querulous is another. The one perceives everywhere

Purpose and Love and Beauty and Order. The other, in a world teeming with these evidences of an all-beneficent God, sees nothing but discord, deformity, and evil, and is ever muttering "Who will show us any Good"! The former, practically, believes, the latter, practically, denies the existence of God. The tendency of all querulous complainings is to cause and perpetuate the folly-created miseries of mankind: whilst the tendency of all honest and hopeful *inquiry* is to *diminish* evil, which, it is seen, is an unnatural excrescence on the fair face of creation, and but usurps, in this beautiful universe, the place of good.

My dear Friends, What is evil? If it means that it is a God-ordained—a God-created *something* which is diametrically opposed to good—a something which has no good in it—nor which can possibly lead to good,—then I say, without fear of contradiction, there is no such thing as evil—*absolute evil*—in the world;—or it *was* created by an all powerful Demon that delights in mischief; and there is no God. But search nature through and you shall not find either *thing* or *circumstance* which answers this description, and of which so terrible a character can be rationally affirmed.

No doubt universal humanity *once* entertained this dreadful notion; no doubt there are nations (still in their primitive state of ignorance) who believe it *now*. This notion led to sacrifices offered upon reeking altars, and to mummeries, and penances, to appease the anger of the invisible spirit whose vengeance was terrific, whose dwelling was among the stars—his horses the harnessed winds, his car the thundercloud, his ministers the whirlwind, and the lightning, and the pestilence, and the all-whelming floods.

Men ignorantly believed that all these evidences of invisible power were so many forms of demoniac vengeance, and not of deific Beneficence and world sustaining Law.

In all the universe there is nothing stationary: all is movement, revolution, mutation, life. Universal stagnation would be universal death. Long experience has given men some wisdom. More experience will bring more wisdom;—and thus on, and on, and on, for ever! The inquiring spirit can no more stop, than matter can remain immutable. His creed of to-day must give place to the truer and the nobler of to-morrow. That *God is Good* will always be a part of it—must always be its *basis*—but *how* Good, and how incapable of evil, we shall only be able to *know* and to appreciate as we advance in Knowledge: for all knowledge consists in a clearer understanding of the works of God, and knowing more and more of HIM;—a study begun in Time to continue through Eternity. Men are slow to learn,—and as long as we are attached to stagnant creeds shall *never* learn (or never dare acknowledge) that there is no such thing as Evil—absolute Evil—in the Universe; and that what we stigmatize by the name of Evil is only Good in the process of development.

What a magnificent idea must that man (great only in his vanity and ignorance) possess of himself who can calmly use those powers given him by his Maker to ask in the hearing of his Maker,—“Who will show us any Good?” As we advance in knowledge, and thus perceive the uses of everything around us, the latent good in all untoward occurrences, learning in short the hidden purposes of God, and what “sweet uses” even the adversity which seems hardest

to bear has ever in store for us, we learn humbly to reverse the question of self-complaisant vanity, and to ask *Who will show us any EVIL?* We learn to regard the so-called Philosopher as an ignorant deceiver, who would persuade us that Evil inheres to all natural things, and that therefore there is no God; and the so-called Doctor in Divinity who would lead us to the same conclusion by his arguments about human depravity, the power of Satan, and the origin of Sin—whatever his sincerity—as a dangerous and mischievous quack. The bane of all “Religion” is the setting up of moral Evil, human depravity, and the dominion of Sin; because, involved therein, is the practical denial and consequent dethronement of God. It is in this quagmire that Atheism takes root,—Atheism that moral Upas tree of which social injustice is the blossom, and wickedness and misery—the fruit. My dear friends, if we could all of us see things as they are, we should erase the word “Evil” from our vocabulary, and thus deprive every shade of what is called Orthodoxy of its arguments, drive Atheism from its stronghold, and emancipate Religion from the obstructions which shut out Heaven from our consciousness, and hinder our communion with God.

This, however, is not to be done in a day. It is the work of enlightenment,—the work of Wisdom, the task of Ages. But we can all help it on: we may all get this enlightenment for ourselves: we can all do something towards communicating this inestimable boon to those about us, and thus reflect the light which illuminates our lives upon those who will occupy our places when we are gone,—they in their turn replenishing it and passing it on, from age to age, for ever.

To this end, then, let us examine this bugbear thing called Evil, and see if it will bear inspection: let us see whether it be white or black; or whether it be not, like the Chamelion, white or black, green or golden, according to the optics of the gazer, or the hue of things about it;—white on the bole of the graceful birch-tree, black in the shadow; green in the summer grass, and golden on the yellow corn burnished by the evening sunlight. Yes, my friends, Chamelion-like is Evil; harmful and repulsive, we have but to view it closely, comprehend its *purpose*, perceive its uses; and then, like everything in God's creation, it is seen to be "very good."

Among the occurrences called Evils arising from the powers of Nature—Fire, Floods, Pestilence, Dearth, Arctic frosts, Tropical heats, Desolating storms—awful as they are in some of their consequences—which of them has not brought enlightenment to Man, the supposed sufferer, and largely assisted in developing his powers, in raising him in the scale of being, and revealing in him intellectual, moral, and religious endowments,—thus bringing him into closer relationship to God? Without fear of contradiction either from Moralists, Philosophers, or Doctors in Divinity, I shall venture to declare—not one! To say nothing of the grander uses of all these occurrences in the economy of Nature, which not infrequently bring widespread ruin and misery in their train, we have only to remember what a fund of knowledge they have brought us;—we have only to look around and see the triumphs in Science and Art, and in the conveniences of life, they have forced us to achieve, to admit, with heart-felt thankfulness, that they have been—

and to the end of time will be—unspeakable blessings to our race. We have begun to know intimately, and (as it were) to live on terms of familiarity and fellowship with the forces of nature ;—to play with the Lightning, to send it on our errands across the globe, to conquer the Pestilence, to defy Famine ;—almost indeed (as the Poet declares of Deity) “to plant our footsteps on the seas and ride upon the storm.” Thus in fearless security,—we carry with us (or at least have the ability to carry with us whenever we shall possess the *will*) a Civilisation which would cheer and invigorate the struggling Liberty of oppressed Nationalities, and raise, physically, morally, and intellectually, the condition of the world.

Look again at that incubus—Despotism, beneath which ignominious burden three-fourths of Earth’s nations groan. “Evil—unmitigated Evil!” exclaim three-fourths of the “Divines”—whilst they side with the Despots. “Evil—unmitigated Evil!” say the Doubters in Providence, and the Disbelievers in the existence of any Good. On the face of the matter, it would indeed seem so ; but look deeper, and the scene changes. Human beings were not created—a few to be Despots and the rest to be slaves ; and when the yoke has galled the neck of the oppressed millions sufficiently, *miser*y will awake their manhood, sharpen their intellects ; then will they *will* their emancipation, and with a bound be free ! Absolute Evil could not be anything else than Evil : whilst the circumstances we stigmatise with the name of Evil are, in their purpose and uses,—nay, in their very nature, *Blessings* ;—mute Angels with flaming swords stationed in our path to tell us when

we are wrong by mercifully vexing us with their weapon points until we awake to a consciousness of our errors, and take courage to be men. It is the same with *War* which decimates our numbers, and crimsones the loveliest scenes in nature with human blood. This national folly—this dreadful wickedness, will cease when Carnage shall have done its work of Mercy—but not till then !

Thus it is, my friends, with all the painful and vexatious circumstances connected with our Social well-being, our Morals, and our Mental culture. They are Angels in the garb of Demons,—Blessings in disguise. Even Crimes and Criminals are blessings if we could truly and fully interpret (instead of blinking the knowledge) the heavenly admonitions they are destined to teach. This much, however, is certain,—there is always (beyond the punishment or reformation of the Criminal and the prevention of crime) some deep-seated injustice to be rooted out (which caused the crime) ; some wrong to be corrected (which produced the Criminal) wherever the mis-shapen things so named are found. Crime is not a natural growth : Criminals are abnormal things ; both are excrescences in Nature ; blots on our civilisation, and show that their roots are battenning on an unnatural stimuli, and that decay is working unseen within.

All Evils therefore are blessings, or might be converted into blessings—if we were *just* and wise. There is but one circumstance bearing the name of Evil which makes your Preacher pause. Not that I hold this circumstance to be an exception to all others ; not that I have any doubts about it ; (I should be most miserable if I had) ; but that

it is a debatable question;—the circumstance I mean is called Death. Is Death an Evil? Is it an absolute cessation of being? or only a change in the mode of being? If the former, *Life* is the Evil, and not Death. If the latter, and if God is good—there is no Evil in the universe.

We have seen that CRIME, and WAR, and DESPOTISM, and PESTILENCE, and FAMINE, and all the mighty FORCES OF NATURE—the overwhelming STORM, the winged LIGHTNING, the resistless FLOOD, the devouring FIRE—all instruments of misery and Death,—we have seen that out of this ruin and misery (and generally a consequence thereof) has come knowledge that has lifted our race from almost *helpless dependence* on the spontaneous products of an uncultivated wilderness, to *Power*, which has turned, and is turning, all these forces of Nature into the answering and obedient slave of their conqueror, Man. These gigantic EVILS (as we have been in the habit of calling them) have ministered to our conveniences and comfort in a degree bearing no comparison with the proportionate smallness of the cost: they have also given us an insight into the lore of Nature which has confirmed and strengthened (at every step of our progress therein) the Bible-assurances that we are heirs to an immortality through our relationship, in Intelligence, to God. But, to what end—for what purpose—is this knowledge imparted?—To what end, for what purpose—are these concurring assurances given—this hope engendered—if Death be a cessation of being, and life, not only a delusion, and an evil, but a Lie?

My dear Friends, I am not going to enter further into a

philosophical disquisition to *prove* what the Bible plainly tells us, what our desires tell us, what Reason tells us, what every fact in Nature tells us, and what we all believe. The task would be as superfluous as to "paint the lily," or seek to add another hue to the brilliant rainbow, spanning in its inimitable splendour the evening sky. We are satisfied that Death is not an Evil, but a Good. We know that Man lives to die, and dies to live, and lives to die no more. We know that in God's good time, to part with our dearest friend at that gate which forms at once the exit from this world of care and trial, and the entrance to an immortality of blessedness,—though such a parting is often hard to bear, is not an *Evil*, but a necessary good. To doubt it were to doubt in the Providence of God; and to *fear* it (whether for ourself or friends) were to doubt his justice. Our human affections make us mourners under the recent pressure of such separations (and our heavenly Father must look down with pitying approval on our sorrow); but, had our Reason the mastery on such occasions, we should not *mourn* as for a dear one *lost*, but rejoice that we have a dear relative, a much loved friend, in Heaven.

The case of King David recorded in that portion of the 12th Chapter of the second Book of Samuel furnishes a very touching and beautiful example of paternal affection and pious resignation, and rational conduct, and holy trust, on the occasion of a domestic bereavement. — "When David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead; therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

"Then David arose from the earth, and washed and

anointed himself, and changed his apparel and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped ; then he came to his own house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

“ Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done ? thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was yet alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

“ And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live.

“ But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? Can I bring him back again ? I shall go to him ; but he shall not return to me.”

None but Parents know the strength and depth of a Parent's love ; and none else can fully realise to themselves the strength and depth of his *affliction*—when there is a blank in the little household which a child, the hope of his life, or (it may be) the prop of his declining age, has filled ! Then it is, we need all David's manly resignation, and all his strong faith in the glorious truth involved in the declaration, “ I shall go to him ; but he shall not return to me : ”—a blessed faith, my dear friends,—a faith which renders vain, and empty, and unsatisfying, and worthless—all besides ! It is the all-comprehending answer to the question of the querulous Complainer—“ Who will show us any Good ? ”—While the world and life roll on, and on, and on, for ever, the feeble reason of the child of Providence may be, at times, overpowered by the vastness of the system amidst which he lives : but his *Faith* will smile upon his

Fear, rebuke his wavering fortitude, and inspire him with the thought, "Nothing can crush or injure me; for I am a child of God; an immortal being; I cannot perish; I am made for eternity. I will do; I will suffer; I will enjoy, as my Father wills! Let the world be stagnant like a lake becalmed! let it surge in anger like the storm-tossed Sea! let life and Time roll on! I am safe from their din and tumult; I repose on the promises of my Father; I will wait patiently until my change shall come!"

Such is the faith which supports—which alone *can* support—the many who, having been whirled along in the eddying stream of social affairs, are withdrawn by one cause or another, to abide in some little creek the onward movement of the mighty tide. The broken-down statesman, politically dead, who sees his successors at work building for themselves a fabric of fame (perhaps as fragile as his own) *on his foundations* without more than a *passing*—perhaps only a *contemptuous* thought of him, HAS NEED OF THIS FAITH. So have the Aged; so have the Sick; so have the Persecuted; so have the unfortunate, the disappointed, the deceived: so, indeed, have the *Prosperous*, during those moments which must occur to all, when sympathy fails, when *means* to much-desired *ends* are wanting; or when satiety makes the spirit roam abroad in search of something better than it has found.

This consciousness of our filial relationship to God; this faith in our immortality, is the only universal refuge;—the haven where the jaded soul can regain its lost serenity, calculate its blessedness, and recollect its energies; either for the business of Life, or the new labours that await it beyond

the grave. It is alike the solace of Royalty when it finds itself sceptreless and throneless, and of Poverty in the midst of its degradation, in the depth of its misery, in the presence of Death. It is the glad tidings preached alike to the rich and to the poor: and, my dear friends, remember this,—in these glad tidings *all* must be poor in *spirit*—lowly in their own estimation before they are entitled to claim a part.

To cultivate this spirit—to render ourselves worthy of this blessedness, we must cast away all repinings, and complainings, and discontent; and whilst we must be ever ready to attack error, and do battle with falsehood and wrong, we must guard against that habit of mind—fatal alike to our own happiness and to the reformation and happiness of the world—which quarrels with everything, until the jaundiced eye sees evil everywhere, and ends by that God-denying thought held up to our reprobation by the Psalmist, “Who will show us any Good?”

May the divine spirit of all Goodness, which dwells within us, ever incline our hearts and souls to this! and lead us to seek truth, and to love mercy, and to follow after righteousness, that we might thus walk humbly, yet confidently, in our good Master’s way—remembering that—

Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervour of *his* prayer :
Deserts and Towns *his* trials knew,—
His conflicts and his victories too.
He is our pattern ! May we bear
More of his gracious image here !
And may we trace the steps he trod,
Which lead to virtue, and to God.

CHARITY.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."
1 Cor. xiii. 1.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—What is Charity? Some will tell you that it is the bestowal of alms—giving to the poor by way of lending to the Lord; or, that this is *one* of its meanings;—and that another meaning of the term charity is—that if you meet vice, or falsehood, or unrighteous power in the highways or byways of the world, you shall pay it (at least, outwardly) the same respect as you would show to virtue, or to magnanimity, or to truth.

As long as falsehood, and oppression, and fraud—these blights of humanity, these impediments to all real progress, these obstructors of religion, these practical deniers of a God—as long as they do not go out of *their* way to interfere (at least, ostensibly) with *us*, we are told by some interpreters of this term, charity, that we are obnoxious to the charge of an *uncharitableness* (notwithstanding that we hope to make the world better and happier thereby) if we go out of our way to unmask and attack *them*. We shall find, however, that Paul has no such meaning. His whole life, and all his writings, are protests against such an interpretation. And so is the life, and so are the sayings of

Jesus.—And so are the lives and the sayings of the other Apostles, and of the Evangelists, and of the Prophets of still higher antiquity.—And so are the sayings and doings of all the great and good men that have left any trace of their existence on the annals of the world. What, then, is charity? In the chapter from which our text is taken, Paul tells us much concerning what charity is *not*; but, to superficial readers, leaves it somewhat doubtful as to what it *is*. We here learn, however, that it is something greater—far greater—than “the gift of prophecy;” something greater—far greater—than the power “to understand all mysteries,” and “all knowledge;” something greater—far greater—even than *Faith*: for, having these, but not having charity, he says, “I am nothing.” It is something greater—far greater—than alms-giving,—something altogether *different* thereto: for he says, “Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” I am neither greater for the power, wiser for the knowledge, holier for the faith, nor better for the act of seeming munificence to the poor; for, without charity, “I am,” he says, “but as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” With all my acquisitions and donations, “I am nothing.” I am neither a worthier child of God, nor one whit nearer heaven.

Still the question remains,—What is charity? Paul tells us something more of what it is *not*. He says, “Charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in

iniquity, but rejoiceth in the *Truth*." Here we will stop;—for what he adds does not much enlighten us. "Charity," then, rejoiceth *not* in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the *truth*. We know what Paul, the Apostle of Jesus, means by "the *truth*," without telling us what charity *is*. Paul tells us what it *hates*—INIQUITY; and what it loves—THE TRUTH. It hates the iniquity Jesus came to reform: it loves the truth he came to propagate. Paul tells us, further, that "Charity suffereth long and is kind." In a word, then, charity is that essence of human nature, called in our ordinary phrase, HUMANITY; and, in scriptural language, LOVE. It is against our nature even in its very lowest phase, to *desire* that another should do us any wrong, think any evil of us, behave unseemly towards us, make us the butt of his ridicule, or the object of his injustice. It is a Law of Nature to *dislike* such treatment *when offered to ourselves*, and to *rebel against it*. Every one of us, without searching for it in the Bible, or learning it at school, knows, as completely as he can know anything, THAT THIS IS TRUE. He knows that his very nature revolts at all intentional injustice, insult, wrong—*when offered to himself*. IT IS A LAW OF HIS NATURE: A LAW OF GOD: and he who thus assails or offends him, wilfully, and "with malice aforethought," *offends against this Law of his Nature—this Law of God*. Now, if we reflect on the matter—the instant after perceiving this truth, we perceive another which grows out of it, namely—If another, by doing me an intentional wrong, violates *this Law of my nature* (which is a Law of God), by doing *him* an intentional wrong, I also violate a Law of *his* nature, which is also a Law of God. That which is not justifiable

in him towards me, cannot be justifiable in *me* towards *him*. In all probability, my friends, the full-grown DOG has a glimmering of this as well as MAN. Here, then, is the first principle of JUSTICE, whether between dog and dog, or between man and man. *Big* and *pugnacious* dogs set this law at defiance when they fall in with weaker and more peaceably inclined dogs than themselves, or specially where there is any coveted good to be obtained by its violations;—the result is injustice and oppression. It is precisely the same among men, and with the same *kind* of result; only, *more frequently repeated*, and a million times greater in amount. Pincher's injustice is temporary and occasional; whilst the Solons and Lycurguses of our own race strive to make *theirs* habitual, systematic, and eternal.—And they succeed too well! It is the violation of this first principle of Justice among men that generates *crime* and *misery* among us, that *raises* some and depresses others, and *degrades and demoralizes* ALL. The first principle of Justice is therefore a self-evident fact, a *truism*, which the very meanest capacity can comprehend at a glance. That which is not justifiable in *another* towards *me*, cannot be justifiable in *me* towards *another*. It is on this *natural* (and therefore philosophical) fact that Jesus based the *moral* portion of his religion—the *love of our neighbour*. If, says he, you would know how to act in all things towards your neighbour, *look within*, and ask yourself how, under the same circumstances, you would have him act towards you. *This is the simple Law of JUSTICE*; and although we *trample* upon it, it is the *moral* Law of the Gospel of Jesus: and the *Eternal* Law of God.

Human Law, which we dignify by the name of Equity and Jurisprudence, and which we are ever tinkering at to make it bearable, and modifying to make it work, is nothing more than the bull-dog's law of the strongest—not the moral law of Jesus—the equitable and everlasting Law of God. To do to others as we would have others do to us, is then the *moral* part of religion, based on a natural principle of Justice which is inherent in our nature, and comprehensible by us all. But common justice (even if men would recognize it) is not *the whole* of religion, but only its lowest part. It has a *spiritual* portion—the *Love of God*—that is, *the desire to grow, spiritually more and more like God*—not only to be *just* as he is just; but to be *beneficent* as He is beneficent; to *raise, and help, and bless our brethren, as He raises, and helps, and blesses us*. If you would rise above the point of Gospel morality and natural law, you must not only respect in your neighbour those feelings and natural rights which, if violated in your own case, your nature revolts at; but, to ascend to the height of which your spiritual nature is capable, you must be ready, when occasion may demand it, to make a voluntary sacrifice of your own natural feelings and natural rights, to *confer* on others—even though they be your enemies—benefits which they could not unaided obtain for themselves. It is by this Love of God exemplified in actions, this growing desire to resemble Him (as the imparters of blessings to all whom it may be in your power to bless)—it is by this Love of God, joined to your love of Natural Justice, and by this only, that you can become Christians—disciples of Jesus—Humanitarians, bearing a likeness in holiness and active beneficence to the

ever holy and all-beneficent God. To be a Christian, therefore, a man must not only conform himself to the simple ideas of Justice as he finds this idea within himself (for this, after all, may be only a prudent carefulness, a thrifty provision for his own worldly welfare, knowing that if he violates God's Law as it exists in another's nature he will be sure to rouse feelings in the person wronged that will violate the same law as it exists in *his*)—but he must rise above this conformity to mere justice, and sometimes voluntarily consent to suffer wrong—must do violence to the feelings of his own nature, that he may confer some *good* (not demanded of him by a sense of Justice) *on another*. This, then, is the very essence of the spiritual portion of our nature: and we give it the name of Humanity, because it is the spirit of Goodness, the natural product of that “Divinity that dwells in man”—which, developed, is Christianity—which is charity—charity which “vaunteth not itself”—which “is not puffed up”—which “seeketh not her own”—“is not *easily* provoked”—“thinketh no evil (*to do it*)”—“rejoiceth not in iniquity,” but which rejoiceth in the truth—the truth as it is in Jesus—the truth as it is in Nature—the truth as it is in God; it is the charity which “suffereth long and is kind.” Paul's beautiful chapter on charity is, therefore, only another mode of expressing what Jesus expressed in these words which are the sum and substance of all religion—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and Him only shalt thou serve; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Said the rich young man to Jesus, pointedly, expressly,—“What shall I do to inherit eternal

life?" "Love God *entirely*, and love thy neighbour as thyself," was the answer of Jesus. Without these you are nothing. Your acquisitions, whether of knowledge or of wealth, will profit you nothing. Your faith will count for nothing. Your alms-giving—your giving to the poor under the fallacious idea that you are lending to the Lord, will end in nothing. It is not by such huckstery that you can gain Heaven. With all these you are still but "as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." You are not a MAN, but only an *outside*; a *husk*; a *blighted grain of wheat*; a *grub-chrysalis with its large-winged butterfly so sadly withered*, that, when released by that Husbandman of Heaven, Death, *pain and powerlessness of flight, instead of freedom, strength, and joyousness, must be the self-inflicted penalty*. If you live for yourself, or if you hope to drive a commerce with Heaven—so much praying, so much lip-service, for so much reward—your life is vain, profitless, useless, nothing.

Self-love, my dear friends, is the mere prompting of our animal nature; and this same prompting the animals feel as well as we. SELF-SACRIFICE is the essence of the *spiritual man*, the *charitable man*, the *Christian*. You can never taste of the joys of Heaven until you know what it is to feel, and to think, and to work, and, if need be, to suffer for others; but all must be *voluntary*, not constrained; all done from the pure prompting of the spirit, and not undertaken for reward. A Christian's heaven is only to be gained by pure, uncalculating, disinterested *Love*. Be not deceived,—this Love which Paul calls Charity, is *Religion*. Blot out the Gospels, and *this Love is Religion still*. Say the New Testament is a romance, and Jesus a

myth. *It matters not—this Love is still Religion.* It has its root in our souls, and will shoot up its stem, and send out its branches, and twine its delicate tendrils from heart to heart, and climb from height to height, until it reaches heaven. If we had not this Gospel of Love we should make one. Blot it out, and we should begin anew. Our danger is, my friends, from its misinterpretation; and from those who would persuade us that we are naturally vile worms scarce worth the saving. But, in the true gospel words of a true poet, I say to every man—"Be to thyself and thy great nature *true*, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."—And this will ever be the good man's religion, let worldly men misinterpret the Gospel, and apply it to their worldly purposes as they will.

We have now seen, my friends, what the Apostle Paul means by charity. It is not Faith; for Faith without works of beneficence is dead—is nothing. It is not works of beneficence in the form of *poor-house* and *hospital alms*; for I may give all I have to feed the poor, but they are poor and wretched still, and not one whit nearer heaven: my largess is thrown away, *and I am nothing*. No, no! *it is not that!* It is not the bestowal of food and raiment that large-souled *Charity* has to do withal. Obedience to the Law of our lower nature—the sense of common Justice, which lives within us, is designed for *that*. Higher, and holier, and more enduring, and more God-like, is the work of Charity; for it "*never faileth*"; it ceaseth *never*; *it can never pass away*. Common Justice sufficeth for the body. The more precious gifts of Charity are intended for the soul.

Until the Gospel Era, we hear nothing of the "BREAD OF LIFE." Until Jesus and his followers coined the metaphor, "The Word of God"—the Truth—was not so designated: the expression originated with them. It was with this "Bread of Life" that Jesus fed the multitude of five thousand that followed him for what he (a homeless wanderer) had to bestow on them; and, agreeably with the nature of this gift, the more he gave, the more he had to give; and if the five thousand had the next moment been fifty thousand, he had more than enough for all. But prosaic scribes and marvel-mongers, who unspiritualise everything, have degraded this God-like act of Jesus into a miracle; and the "Bread of Life"—a homely, but an expressive and apt metaphor—has become "three barley loaves and two small fishes." No, no! my dear friends, the boon which Jesus bestowed on the world, and left behind him for all of us to bestow on each other, was DEIFIC CHARITY—charity that hates oppression, loves the truth, grows by the giving, "faileth never," "ceaseth never," and "can never pass away." No! Let us get rid of the notion that heaven-born charity feeds men in alms-houses, and poor-houses, and soup-kitchens, and hospitals; its divine mission is to break down the selfishness—the system of injustice—which reduces any of God's children to *such infamous straits, such degrading requirements*, and to lift the soul of universal humanity from grovelling earthliness to a companionship with angels—to a community with heaven. THIS IS THE WORK OF CHARITY; and not doling out pence in alms to support an unholy system which does what all other villany is prone to do—preys on the virtue which it despises, and

fattens on the large-hearted, but mistaken, philanthropy of the world. You must bear in mind, that it is PAUL, the Apostle of Jesus, who is preaching to you,—and not *I*. It is the spirit of the martyred *Paul*, the Apostle of the martyred *Jesus*, the friend of the oppressed, the fearless champion of the truth,—that speaks to you from his home of glory above the jewelled curtain of the sky! *I*, the humble utterer of his words, am but the feeble echo of his voice of power, at which tyrants, from Felix downwards, have been wont to tremble, and would tremble still, but for the wicked Judases who share their power and prerogatives and receive their pay. *Pay!* O what a world of wickedness and evil lurks in that word PAY! *Those thirty silver pieces* for which the false Apostle sold his master—cast down in the temple before he hanged himself, but carefully gathered up by his three false successors, and put out to compound interest by them—have grown into a power by which Jesus is systematically betrayed and crucified, and his message of Liberty and Love to all men falsified, every day, until Christendom is one extended Calvary! Well might Rome be lavish of her crosses! Well might she rear them high in air outside her churches, as a sign that Christ is daily crucified *within!* Well might she plant them on her highway sides as a trophy of her daily conquests over truth! Well might she scatter them through all the domiciles where dwell her deceived and juggled votaries! Well may her priests sign with the Cross, and teach the people, on their deluded foreheads, to make this sign! Well might the Puseyite Papists, receiving the wages of Episcopacy in the Lutheran Church, erect this symbol on their altars, and emboss it on

their prayer books, and embroider it on their preaching and singing robes! *for it is the sign of wide-extended TREACHERY, and not of TRUTH!* But we learn from Jesus, and the Apostles, and especially from the deep-read, energetic, and laborious PAUL, that it is the glorious work of God-like CHARITY to unmask this TREACHERY, and to conserve and enthrone this Truth.—And were Paul now among us how resistlessly would this work of Love and Liberty go on!—drowning a second time with Truth's impetuous torrent, the mummeries and falsehood of a traitorous, misbelieving, priest-deluded world! I think I hear him thundering in the Vatican—"Away with your idolatries, and your superstitions, and your consecrated wafers, and your pretended relics of pretended saints—your winking Madonnas, and your bleeding pictures—away with them! What have your petrified religion and your dead relics to do with the living truth? Christ came to make this beautiful land *a paradise*, to be inhabited by the good, the beautiful, the free! but you have made it into a thorny wilderness, a den of infamy, and the home of slaves!"—and turning to these slaves, I think I hear him uttering words of comfort, words of hope:—Men and brethren, listen no longer to those deceivers. "Be not *children* in UNDERSTANDING: howbeit in MALICE *be ye children*, but in UNDERSTANDING *be MEN*." (1 COR. xiv. 20.) "*Be no more children*, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. iv. 14.) "For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts. Ever learning, and never able to

come to the knowledge of the truth. From such turn away." (2 Tim. iii. 5-7.) "Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Gal. v. 13, 14.) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. vi. 2.) "Whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good report*; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (*to do them*)." (Phil. iv. 8.) "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (Eph. vi. 12, 13.) "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other (thing or circumstance), shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus." (Rom. viii. 37-39.) Remember, brethren, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14), and that "Where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there is *liberty*." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. v. 1.) "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a

building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1.)

After this manner would PAUL (at whose feet we sit to-day) reprove, denounce, entreat, exhort, command; prompted in all by soul-uplifting charity—warning all men to flee from *Selfishness*, and to follow after *Righteousness*; and to plead, and struggle, and contend—suffering all and daring all—for the TRUTH which is able to make us good, and beautiful, and free; and this earth (made sterile to millions by the selfishness of a few) to bloom in beauty like the vernal rose! And what (if we have hearkened diligently) is the lesson we have learned? Let us endeavour to collect its substance. We have learned that Christianity consists of two parts or particulars—JUSTICE and BENEFICENCE; that doing to our neighbour as we would our neighbour should do to us, is the rigid rule of JUSTICE,—neither *taking* more nor *giving* more than is the naturally ascertained right of each; but that the heavenlier part of Christianity—BENEFICENCE, consists of that voluntary yielding up of a portion of our own natural rights, our worldly goods, our time, our talents, our ease, our comfort, for the purpose of conferring good on others, which, having no self-seeking in it, becomes likeness to God, from which our "love of God" can alone be predicated or inferred. We have further learned that the more spiritual and God-like part of this beneficence (which has for its object the bestowal of permanent or spiritual blessings on our fellow-men) is CHARITY, without which, our Teacher tells us, we are "but as sounding brass or tinkling cymbals," our labours vain, ourselves "*nothing*." We have learned that "giving to the poor" by way of "lending to the Lord"

is a fallacy, a mistake, even when what we give is our own ; but when bull-dog law, or the law of the strongest, is the law of men, giving back a portion of our unjustly-gotten gains to secure the remainder—substituting alms-giving for natural justice, and this under the notion that, by this alms giving we are “laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven,” *is the saddest of all self-deceptions*. It may be in the true spirit of *commerce*, but it is not in the spirit of *Christianity*. Privileges and preferments, honours and dignities *are* (yet *ought not to be*) so purchased *here*, but they are not to be so obtained in heaven. *Charity* has no heavenlier work than to break down this donation-giving fallacy. Let me ask,—*Which princely, or lordly, or richly-endowed GIVER would willingly exchange conditions with the beggarly RECEIVER?* This is the *test*, my dear brethren ; and remember, it is not a test of my invention—a test capriciously proposed to gratify any whim or feeling of *my own*—it is the test of righteousness *proposed by Jesus, based on the immutable JUSTICE, the everlasting LAW of GOD*. Deny this test, its *justice*, its *validity* its truth, and you deny Jesus and dishonour God ! *Admit it*, and what becomes of the Christianity of Christendom ? What of the system, social, civil, and religious, under the noxious influence of which such things can be, “and overcome us like a summer’s cloud, *without men’s special wonder?*”

It is the preacher’s mission to reform this spurious Christianity and to break down this system ; for we now know that DIVINE CHARITY is only another name for DIVINE LOVE, *working in the human soul for righteousness and truth, and for the redemption of all men from ignorance, and ir-religion,*

and mental bondage, and bodily degradation, and oppression ; now we know that Charity is the LOVE OF GOD *manifesting itself in active sympathy for the wrongs and sorrows of humanity*, we may boldly declare, without fear of contradiction or the chance of mistake, that to this divine task of the Christian preacher, CHARITY at once furnishes the motive, affords the sanction, and supplies the means.

Let not those who think that CHARITY is all inoffensiveness, and tenderness, and tears, continue in the mistake. When its *heart of pity* most bleeds for *others*, it is most energetic in its determination "to do or die" in their defence. Tenderness is criminal weakness when only (what seems) unfeelingness can save. The surgeon amputates the limb but saves the life. To do a great general good, Charity must often do a little violence to the feelings of individuals; but never, I believe, if conscious thereof, without doing a greater violence to its own. The rule for our guidance herein is this,—When dealing with individual *persons*, whose faith or principles it is our duty, as Christians, publicly or privately to oppose, we are to do this with all possible gentleness and delicacy, using moral suasion, and if possible, avoiding all occasion of offence; but when it is our duty to wage war with institutions and systems, with banded bodies of men where *associated* pride only may be wounded, and its prejudices alone be hurt, *then* has the champion of Charity full liberty to use whatever weapons its armoury supplies him with, or the urgency of the case requires. *Then* it is right to call things by their proper names, and whatsoever our charity "finds to do, to do it with our might." We cannot have higher examples than Jesus and Paul,—and

this was their practice.—And as it is *their* truth and *their* principles for which alone a *Christian* can contend, we need have no doubt as to what the truth is we undertake to maintain, or what the falsehood *is* we undertake to oppose and crush. The GOSPELS are our *warrant*, and the *cause* HIS who reared the heavens, and who made humanity in his own glorious likeness ; not to be defiled by selfishness, but that it might aspire, on the wings of truth, and through works of charity, to him, the Giver, to whom be all glory and honour for ever!

POVERTY:

ITS EVILS AND ITS MISSION.

“There is one that laboureth and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind. And there is another that is slow, and hath need of help, wanting ability, and full of poverty; yet the eye of the Lord looked upon *him* for good, and set him up from his low estate, and lifted up his head from misery, so that many that saw it marvelled at him.”—ECCLESIASTICUS xi. 12, 13.

PERHAPS there is no lesson harder to learn than that *Adversity* is the parent of blessing; and that its bitter fruit has manifold and mighty *uses* for mankind. *Herein*, a man of Sorrows should instruct you. He only is the qualified instructor and the happy man who, in suffering wrong, and persecution, and adversity, hath learned the great lesson of forbearance, and charity, and sympathy towards all mankind. Out of such painful circumstances have the world's greatest teachers ever come; and towards such teachers will its highest and holiest aspirations ever be directed.—To have been born to affluence, and cradled in Luxury, is, in the majority of cases, to have been doomed, by parental fondness or folly, to a life of uselessness, and sensuality, and disappointment. To *toil* for wealth is also better than to *inherit* it: but WEALTH is not HAPPINESS—whether inherited

or earned. Generally speaking, in both instances we might see the anomalous abortion glanced at by the Son of Sirach—"There is one that laboureth, and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and is so much the more behind:" whilst, in the man born to penurious adversity we recognise that other—"who is slow, and hath need of help, wanting ability, and full of poverty," whom "the eye of the Lord looketh upon for good, and setteth up from his low estate, and lifteth up his head from misery," until he hath become a marvel among men. The evils of Opulence are hard to be perceived and believed in; and the miseries of Poverty are hard to bear. Both conditions are abnormal and illicitous, and tend to obstruct the soul's growth, and to obscure our humanity; but whilst I agree with Owen Feltham that "Extreme poverty is worse than abundance," I am sure that the world's progress in Knowledge and Goodness owes more to Penury and its attendant, Adversity, than to wealth. Feltham says, "We may be good in plenty, if we will; in biting penury we cannot, though we would. In one the danger is *casual*: in the other 'tis *necessitating*. That is best which *consists of neither*, and partakes of both. He that hath too little, wants feathers to fly withal: He that hath too much is cumbered, like the peacock with too large a tail." "If," continues Feltham, "a flood of wealth could profit us, it would be good to swim in such a sea: but it can neither lengthen our lives, nor enrich us after the end."

My purpose in the present discourse is, however, not so much to point out the evils of Poverty and the sins of Wealth, as to show you that neither condition forms part of

the eternal plan of Providence, or results from obedience to the immutable Laws of God. The distinctions between High and Low, Rich and Poor, *exist*: they are *patent* to all; are *recognised* by all; but they are *arbitrary*. They do not impeach God's justice, which is unimpeachable; but only man's justice, which is at present far from being just. Although great and manifold are the uses of Adversity (as I hope presently to convince you), higher and holier are the uses of Justice and of Truth; for, whilst adversity might force us blindfold into the path of usefulness and duty, it is better and more commendable to *choose* the path of rectitude, lighted thereto by *knowledge*, and influenced by a love of *Right*, for *then* are we,—and only then—what *free-agents should be, righteous by force of character and moral choice; and not by the force of circumstances*, or of NECESSITY, which would leave to our act nothing of Righteousness but the name.—No, “God is righteous in all his ways; and beneficent over all his works.” He does not create to destroy. He does not accord to men the noblest faculties to mock and confound them in their noblest use. He created men free-agents, not machines: and they are responsible because free. Whatever obstructs their onward progress in the path of Truth and Righteousness they have liberty to yield to, or permission and authority to remove. Over God's Laws—break and despise them as we may—we can never obtain a victory; but, over all human circumstances (which are for the most part no other than human violations of God's Law) we can be the laurelled Conquerors if we will. All human violations of God's Law (whether written or unwritten, or by whatsoever means revealed) terminate in

misery *somewhere*. To prevent or remove the misery we have but to obey the Law; and this Misery—this Adversity, is the gracious Angel that meets us rebellious Balaams in the way—whenever we go to *curse* and not bless our brethren. In all such cases we may be sure we are mounted on a beast that will crush our feet against the wall; or, if we urge him still, our beast will find, as Balaam's did, a *tongue*; and the suffering animal will audibly reprove the Erring Spirit that holds the reins; and—instructed of God, the slave direct the master.

Yes, my friends, a gracious Angel is this gorgon-visaged, grim Adversity, for ever brandishing a two-edged sword before us; and sometimes wounding us therewith, (but ever in pity, not in anger,) that we might learn through physical suffering, and care, and disappointment, what we have failed to learn through spiritual and intellectual admonitions. Let no man—be *whom* he may, or *what* he may, persuade you, my dear friends, that God is a Tyrant: that he created men in sport;—pre-ordaining some to endless happiness, and fore-dooming others to endless woe; or that he has predestined some to Toil, and Degradation, and Poverty, *in this world*; and others to Ease, and Idleness, and Opulence, and Power. Be assured that all who would so persuade you—whether priests or laymen, philosophers or clowns—are false teachers;—*deceived* they may be, but false teachers still,—and the truth is not in them. At any rate, you have my honest thought. I have no interest in misleading my poorer brethren—to whom, whether here or elsewhere, this discourse is specially addressed: my worldly interests are all the other way; for, let me tell you, that, in a worldly point

of view, and in a world where all the governing influences are artificial,—there is nothing more profitable than Falsehood and DISSIMULATION in such matters; and nothing more UNPROFITABLE than TRUTH.

A great profit has been made—and is still being made, out of this false and wicked idea concerning God. Power winks at the lie; nay, professes to believe it; and pays liberally for its propagation. Believe me, GOD IS TRUTH! GOD IS LOVE!—and, (to use the hackneyed expression) his “dealings” with men are purely beneficent and just. The beautiful Truth out of which all this impiety and error came (pardonable in the days of heathenish ignorance, but unpardonable *now*) is *this*:—Out of all Error, and worldliness, and Selfishness, and Wrong, the Deity has graciously ordained that Adversity shall spring up, like weeds in neglected gardens, to show us that all our misery comes from the abuse of our Liberty, and the misuse or neglect of the high powers and prerogatives he has given us; and to tell us, moreover,—and that, trumpet-tongued,—that we might conquer all the evils from which we suffer—*if we will*. As we *neglect* or *tend* the ever-fruitful garden of our minds it will yield noxious and poisonous weeds, or fruit-producing Flowers. If we study the laws of Health, and *obey* them,—which means “temperance in all things,” we shall subdue *disease*. If we *disobey* these Laws, we must suffer pain, and transmit it as an inheritance to our children. If we, selfishly, love ourselves more than we love our Neighbours, our Neighbours will, as selfishly love themselves more than they love us. Whilst the Christian converse of this unchristian rule, if followed out, would banish Selfishness from the world, and Poverty, and Wealth,

and Sin. We *must* believe this if we believe in the Gospel. But it is a *philosophical* truth as well as a Gospel truth. It is a truth, moreover, which those who tell us that God took on himself the form and nature of a man for the very purpose of teaching it—*dare not*, I presume, deny. But this great truth is written in our souls as well as in the Bible—and so are all the others. The facts I have stated illustrate the LAW I just now pointed out, *as well as its benign INTENTION*.

The evils we call Adversity spring out of WRONG: abolish or reform the wrong; and the evil ceases. Of all the forms in which Adversity comes there is none like Penury: it is the monster Evil of humanity, and generates nearly all the others. I need not name them. We know them all. Remove Poverty from the world,—nay, remove but the *fear of want*;—and the ugliest of our evils take their flight at once. Let Justice be done between man and man,—and Penury, and want, and crime, and ignorance,—and the distorted countenances in which all these are pictured—would be known no more. But Poverty is not a personal vice of which I can rid myself at will *like smoking*. It is a social evil of which the Poor are not so much the authors as the victims. True—yet they have the *remedy* in their own power had they but the *will* and the *skill* to use it. Had the Good God purposed that some men should be Workers and others Idlers—some Poor and others Rich; had some been destined by Him to revel in Superfluous Abundance, and some to toil ever on the brink of want; some to be masters and some slaves;—in a word, some to be inferior to the rest (as nearly all “religious”

teaching either broadly asserts or disingenuously implies); in the first place,—the Inferiors and Superiors would not be able to exchange conditions,—which we all know is not the fact: and, in the next place, the Good God *would* not—*could* not have made them sensible of their degradation.

What is the fact?—Poor and Rich alike, Workers and Idlers, the Revellers and the Wretched, are all born with souls of the same Celestial essence, and panoplied with the same glorious powers—powers, not bestowed on us for getting the mastery over one another here, but that, on their full-fledged pinions, we might soar to Him—the Giver! But we have bedabbled (Rich and Poor alike), and we are still bedabbling, our Spirits' wings in the mud and mire of SENSUALISM, and we cannot soar. With a divine longing within us for we know not what, and a divine energy adapted to the gratification of this longing—since we cannot, or rather *will not*, ascend to the wide Heaven where God is, we fight and squabble, or bear and murmur—*here*; and, ever, those who get the best of what is *bad essentially*, turn moralists and RELIGIOUS ADMONISHERS, and preach submission and contentment to the rest. But, so did not Jesus; and so will not I. HE says—and, mark you, what he says to *one* he says to *all*; for *his* religion is not for a *Sett*, or a Party, or a favoured Few,—but for the entire world—“Take no thought for your *life*, what ye shall eat, and what ye shall *drink*: nor yet for your body what ye shall put on: Is not the life (is not the soul with its glorious attributes) more than meat; and the body (the temple of the soul) more than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor

gather into barns ; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. And are not ye much better than they ? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But seek ye *first* (for we are not to turn savages and *neglect* them)—But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” What we need, then, is,—not to banish Art, and Literature, and Science, and Agriculture, or even Commerce, from among us ; but that (God’s kingdom and his Righteousness being our *first* aim) these Arts and Sciences—the product of our highest powers—should be made the subservient helps to the high destiny for which we are all created ;—helps to the practice of Righteousness to the work of Love and to the ascent of the winged soul to its native home in Heaven !

Religion, my dear friends, is a very simple thing. Decorate the pillars that uphold the Temple as we will ; sculpture the Capital ; flute the columns ; adorn the base—no matter with what richness or elaboration ; it is still the simple brick or stone that bears up the superstructure—roof, dome, or tapering spire, high in air ! It is not the *ornament* that makes the FANÆ. It is not the rich garment or the flowing robe that makes the MAN. It is not the superstitious “*laying on of hands*” that makes the PREACHER. It is not the pomp of words that constitute WORSHIP. It is not forms and ceremonies that constitute RELIGION. Religion consists *in acts of reverence towards the Great Author of our being, and in acts of love towards our fellow-creatures, asking most attention to those who most need our help ; and*

then, WORK is worship ; Truth inspires the Preacher ; Goodness ennobles and adorns the man ; AND THE WIDE COPE OF HEAVEN (beneath which *all* is consecrated ground) the dome of our cathedral,—high as the stars, and broad as the foundations of the world. Thus SIMPLE, and thus SUBLIME, *because thus* SIMPLE, is Christ's Religion. Would to God that it were universally known for what it is ! But, alas, it is *not* thus known !—and if it ever *be* thus known, it appears to me that the great work of *making* it thus *known* and *believed* in is a glory reserved for the Poor !

Without intending to nauseate you with the common cant of religious criticism on the subject of men's short-comings, I will say that, so little do the man-made circumstances under which we live enable us to realise, even in thought, the idea of a Christianity like this ;—so little does the system of "Christianity as by Law established" (a very proper distinction !) HELP men to realise this primitive idea ;—so seductive are the amusements and pleasures which Wealth is wedded to, and Power conserves ;—and so prevalent are the falsehoods by which alone this conservation is rendered possible ; that I say, Blessed be the name of God for ever that He has made Adversity to arise out of Folly and Wrong ; and further—for in wisdom and mercy He has so ordained it—that the weight of this adversity falls heaviest on the Poor. —Do not think there is in this seemingly heartless declaration any want of sympathy with human sufferings however caused, or by whomsoever borne. I have not passed through the world without sorrow ; sorrow, which, humanly speaking, I had no right to bear : but I say now, with calm sincerity, I might have been less happy, perhaps less useful,

a less sympathising member of Humanity, had I suffered a pang less than has fallen to my share. I can, therefore, say with the poet who, no doubt, wrote from experience as well as insight,—

“Sweet are the uses of Adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head :”

In this congregation we are all workers ; and we are all poor enough to know that the *poverty* of the poor man is *the least portion of his misery*. There are but few of us, I imagine, who have not experienced the fact, that “Poverty hath nothing harder in it than that it makes men scorned.” But, the scorn away, it is no light thing that, in all the storms of fortune the Poor are the first that must stand the shock of its extremity. If an invading army comes, the Poor man (and not so much by his own brave *will* as *pressed thereto by indigence*) is the first to meet the invader foot to foot,—the first to lay down his life for his country,—a single rood of whose broad acres he cannot claim as *his* ;—and— I blush to say it !—the *last* to be remembered with gratitude or honour when the victory has been won. In Famine, also, as in War, the penurious class endures the harass and supplies the victims. In like manner, the first and last victims of a Pestilence *are the Poor*. A Poor man is a perpetual sentinel, watching day and night against the incessant assaults of Want. His work is never done. His cupboard is often empty ; rarely full. His inheritance is toil : and this (save only his virtues and good name) is the only inheritance he can bequeath to his children : and let me pause to remind you that,—paltry as the gift seems, many

an affluent father leaves behind him treasures far less valuable ;—for no man knows whether the hoards of wealth his life is spent in accumulating, will bring honour or infamy, blessing or bane, on his children. But, though not an unmindful, or an unsympathising, observer of the struggles, and hardships, and temptations, of the toiling poor, and though I know them to be the result of Injustice and Wrong, I cannot shut my eyes to the facts, that, whilst *human misdoing creates* these evils, *human energy*, directed rightly, can *destroy* them ; and that Misery's sharp tooth, lacerating the masses, is the best prompter, and the surest help, to the work of their destruction. My dear Friends,—and this is a *fact for us all* ; for we are all poor enough, and illiterate enough, and enough the sport of circumstances and the victims of wrong, to be interested in the knowledge, were the Poor as rich in the great Gospel-truths I have been declaring as the greater portion of them are known to be in neighbourly virtues (virtues which, though unrecorded on earth, are registered in Heaven) ;—did their knowledge of the truth about God ; and their knowledge of man's true nature, and real wants, and great powers (which only remain undeveloped in themselves because unbelieved in and unknown) bear any approximate proportion among them to their *numbers*, the Falsehood which keeps them illiterate and poor, could not maintain its pre-eminence another century, — perhaps, for Truth is omnipotent — another year.

But, though the fact is thus stated in a sentence, the work to be accomplished is one of inconceivable magnitude, and, under the most favourable circumstances, must be the

slowly-progressing labour of many a weary age. Yet, not on that account should it be neglected. Jesus began it eighteen centuries ago. Worldliness has interrupted it, and diverted it from its object, and metamorphosed it into an instrument for purposes of its own. It has to be begun *de novo*; and what labourer, on the plea that he might not live to see the harvest, refuses to put his hand to the plough? It is essentially the *poor man's* work. "Hearken, my beloved brethren," says the Apostle James, "hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?" I say again, the promulgation of the Religion of Jesus is essentially the poor Man's work. Potentates, Princes, Peers, Popes, Prelates,—*Pretenders*, should not be again allowed to put their hand to the labour. It is for *their profit* as well as *ours* that Righteousness should reign on Earth and God's kingdom come; but they are blind and will not see that Righteousness is even-handed *Justice*, and God's kingdom universal *Love*. They prefer to see things as they are—Morality going slipshod; Religion in leading strings; Talent ready to sell itself to the highest bidder; Genius exhausting itself on trifles; the Intellect of the masses lying fallow; the Soul,—(always pining for its proper work to do, and its proper sphere to move in)—employed in forging fetters for itself, and calling these fetters Law, Order, Civilisation, Government, and (folly of follies!) Christianity! Such men cannot help us to disseminate the great Truths of the Gospel. The work was begun (and must be continued, and carried to its beneficent completion)—by the poor;—the poor of this world, "as the

Apostle calls us, rich in our faith in Truth, our trust in God ; —the Labourers in his vineyard,—and the chosen “heirs of his kingdom.” Let not, then, the poorest among us murmur that he is poor ; yet never let him forget that his poverty and the sufferings it entails upon him come, not through any ordinance of God, but through the folly, and selfishness, and injustice, of men. Avoid this error, however,—Let not any unchristian thought of revenge or hatred towards the affluent or the titled (false lights and leaders though they be) ever be permitted to dwell one moment in his mind. Let him reflect that, *were HE, where power is, he would do what Power does* : If he wishes well to the world at large ; if he hates oppression, and loves Justice, trusts in a good God, and would see His kingdom of Love established,—*let him be thankful that he is exactly what he is ; for, in another condition the chances are that he would be another man.* If it is better to love God and follow after righteousness, than to flaunt in finery,—be called “honourable,” and neglect these duties, let us be thankful every one of us, that we are poor, having *Adversity as our Monitor to lead us into the better way.* If the poor are appointed to do God’s work (and *they*, it is, who *have* done it *hitherto*), if by *being* poor they are in a fitter condition to aid in the removal of that poverty of purse and soul by which the millions are everywhere weighted down, and forced to do the work of wickedness,—counted as inferiors, branded as things to be used—commodities to be bought and sold—and, worse still, because it is the *root* of the mischief—to be pacified into submission by the impious doctrine that God *made* us to be so parcelled out and appropriated ;—instead of, by

the attainment of knowledge, and the purification of our souls by christian Love, to fit ourselves for the companionship of Angels, and for bearing, with what we can of worthiness, the proud titles which the Gospel gives us of the Sons and Daughters of an all-beneficent God ; *if this be so (and it is so) which of us would not be poor !* If *this* be the gracious work, *FITTEST for the poor—and which must be DONE by the poor*, which of us would change his condition for the gauds, and the insignia, and the titles, and the short-lived, empty, honours of the rich ? In the name of God and of Humanity—not *I* ! As a last word, let me exhort you, then, to remain faithful to the light that is in you ;—faithful to the Church that, by the help of the Gospel of Jesus, would reveal to you this light, and do its best to communicate it to your Children, and transmit it—increasing in brilliancy as it goes on—to a happier, and still happier, posterity, for ever.

Let me, as I *began*, *conclude*. “There is one that laboureth, and taketh pains, and maketh haste,—*and is so much the more behind.*” I hope, my dear Friends, I have convinced you what manner of man he is.

“And there is another that is slow, and hath need of help, wanting ability, and full of poverty ;—*Yet the eye of the Lord looketh upon him for good, and will set him up from his low estate, and will lift up his head from misery.*” If what I have said has been in any way instrumental in quickening the progress towards Truth and active Goodness of the “slow ;” in helping those who have needed “help ;” in adding any useful power to such as are wanting in “ability ;” or of comforting those who are “full of poverty ;” and of

showing such “that the eye of the Lord looketh upon them for good ;”—If I have aided *in any of these things*,—it will, through what remains of life, be a solace to me and a joy ;—whilst even the *hope* that it *has been so*—relieves one of *some* of the sorrow that mingles with the parting word—Farewell !

THE DIVINITY THAT DWELLS IN MAN.

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them : and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”—ISA. xxxv. 1.

MY FRIENDS, for *whom* shall the wilderness and the solitary place be glad? and, for whom shall the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose?—For the man who *hopes*: for the man who perseveres: for the man who trusts in the never-failing justice and providence of God!

In every block of marble there is a beautiful statue, of which no hand hath wrought the like, which no eye hath seen, no mind imagined. Let *Hope* go hand in hand with *Genius*, and presently the statue shall appear. It is but to chip the useless and superfluous parts away, and lo the marble lives! the gazer is in raptures: the admiring world shall thenceforth babble of its beauty!

In every *quarry* there is a Temple rivalling the Parthenon in just proportions. Let *Perseverance* and *Genius* work together, and, after years of toil and a world of difficulty, the Fane that will be world renowned is builded.

There is something *Great*, *Original*, and *Good* that lingers yet unshapen in the mind (why not?) of some lone listener here;—it might be an Epic poem, or an Essay, or

an Anthem, or a Song, that Fame shall speak of centuries hence, with a blessing on its Author. Let a spirit of Goodness inspire the effort, and an unfaltering trustfulness in God cheer the lone worker on, and behold ! that which had no sensible being, *is* ! A *thought* has become a *THING* ! a thing perhaps of beauty, on which the all-obliterating foot of Time shall delicately and lightly tread.

Without a *friend* the world is but a barren place, a "howling wilderness;" but, let the lone one *hope*, and *persevere*, and *trust in the never failing providence of God*; and friendless though he be, this wilderness shall bloom for *him*. It is hard at first. Hoping against hope is weary work; harder, wearier, and more spirit-breaking than those who have never known what "hope deferred," and still deferred, yet clung to, can realise even in imagination: but, when the thick clouds sunder (as in time they will!) and the Sun bursts forth,—the joy it brings is worth the waiting for. It is then we realise the promise of Jesus—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

My dear friends, Life without an *object* greatly resembles the world without a friend; it is a wilderness that cannot be made to bloom; or, if the object be unworthy the winning, life is still but a barren wilderness when all is over. But if the object be a righteous one, God is already with the worker: he is neither lone nor friendless; and though a cold unsympathising world, gazing askance at him, may fancy that he fails, the smiling Angel in his bosom encourages him; blesses him; cheers him on; and whether he gain or miss the laurel for which worldlings work—vulgar applause, a seat in the senate, a good round sum in the

three and a half per cents., with liveried lacqueys to attend him, and sycophants to chaunt his praise—whether he miss or obtain these coveted ephemera, he wins a prize he would not barter for the whole of them. The conqueror of Evil, is still a conqueror though clothed in rags, and *is certain of a conqueror's meed.*

God is just. No wilful wickedness goes unchastised : it is its own chastiser. No good and virtuous action goes unrewarded ; it is its own reward. There is a statue in the Sandstone and the Granite block, as well as in the Marble : in like manner there is a soul of goodness in Every man, no matter what his Education, lineage, Creed, Colour, or Condition ;—a soul that is the copy of no other soul ; and He *alone* can show the world the fashion of it ; it cannot be another's work ; for, if other men fashion it for him after some conventional pattern of their own, it is at best but a distorted, mis-shapen thing. Capable like the stars in the firmament of heaven, of shining by its own light, the soul is dishonoured when it is compelled to reflect the conventional glimmer, which has been transmitted by reflection adown the ages until it has parted with the lustre of the source from whence it sprang, and is no longer light.

Now, this Divinity that dwells in Man—*this Soul*, which, like the unwrought Statue in the marble block, the un-built Temple in the quarry, or the Epic yet unshapen in the mind, awaits but recognition and culture to develop it into something so Great, so perfectly Beautiful, so infinitely above comparison with all material things—whether Statues, or Temples, or circling Planets, or Central Suns—that it seems to absorb (if it does not actually absorb) all other

things, and *qualities* of things, and space, and Time, and Deity, into itself;—so wonderful in its nature,—so infinite in its longings and comprehensiveness, is that viewless particle—the Human Soul! This is not rant, my friends; nor is it meant for rhetoric; for it is literally and truly through this Deific portion of us, that we are able to comprehend all Nature—(in its grandeur or its minuteness) and to *know* all we *can* know of the fount and centre of all Being, as well as to hold *communion* with God.

The whole milky-way of stars cannot think a thought, nor do an act, nor feel an aspiration; no, nor move through space, nor be at rest, by any impulse of their own. They are simply passive to their great Sustainer's Law. But look at the Human Soul! It gets a glimmering of its God—sometimes, perhaps, a steady momentary gaze—solely by sharing in His attributes:—we have the faculty of knowledge; the power to *will*, to Do; the aptitude and the desire to make constant acquisitions in Knowing, Willing, Doing, and Being, for ever and ever. Yes! the soul, with these finite attributes of the Infinite God, exceeds in worth and glory a whole hemisphere of Stars! This is not said, my Christian friends, to make you proud; but to inspire Love, and pious thankfulness towards Him whom it has pleased to implant in us the germ of his own infinite perfections, and thus to make it possible to rise through this Love, nearer, and for ever nearer to Himself.

To remind you of two facts will be enough to subdue our rising pride, and confirm us in Humility.—Without this germ of progress—this Truth-needing, religion-needing soul,—the way-side weed would be as estimable as man,—the

odour-breathing Rose more glorious. Again. To neglect—to leave unused, unnoticed, unimproved, this boon—as millions upon millions of us do—how little are we better for the gift than if we had it not! To these, at least, this world is but a dreary wilderness. The “talent” intrusted to our care, we are told by Jesus, if not put out to use, shall be taken from us and given to another. It is only by the *use*—the faithful, hopeful, persevering, *exercise* of our God-like faculties, that this wilderness, struck barren by our follies, can be made to blossom like the Summer’s Rose. —Now, to say nothing of the sacred utterances of *the Book of Books*;—to say nothing of the sublime denunciations of the Prophets against sin; or of the gentler teachings and divine example of Jesus of Nazareth and his apostles, touching a life of holiness—of trustfulness in God, and of love and charity to all mankind,—saying nothing of these, although to a Christian these are *everything*;—but looking solely to that relationship in which we stand to God as possessors of a Nature akin to His, so manifested to all as to be evident to the least instructed mind among us, that will take the trouble to devote a moment’s attention to the matter, is it not clear to *what object* our duty and our highest interest point as that on which our whole energies ought to be bent, and to which our daily lives should be devoted?

What is the Statue of an Apellus starting, in life-like loveliness, from the Parian marble at the Sculptor’s magical and creative touch,—what is its beauty, its durability, its worth, to the soul within us, which it is our business, and should be our chiefest care, to fashion for a

niche in heaven, and furnish with the graces needful for eternity?—My dear friends, there is no higher duty than this: the Bible does not make it one iota more imperative on us than does our knowledge of the Soul's nature and capacity which I have just presented to you as the first, great, obvious fact which furnishes the base for true philosophy, and leads directly to Religion. But the Bible comes in to aid and support Philosophy, and makes that surer which was always sure; or, if it seem more decorous towards the *Book of Books*—which I read and examine, and reverence for the Truth and Divinity I find in it, but do not slavishly believe in, much less *worship*—if it be deemed more decorous—let me say that Philosophy supports and proves all the great Truths revealed to us by the Bible. Each proves, and confirms, and supports the other; and both point out the fact, that to live for the Soul and not for the body, is to live in accordance with our real nature, and agreeably to the will of God.—I repeat it, there is no *higher* duty: nor—were we all agreed as to the fact of this duty, and the manner of its performance—could there be anything more easy and delightful: for Piety is the natural product of the highest truth: and had we (all of us) this knowledge (which would go in a nutshell) it would not be more easy for the grass to grow, the Birds to sing, the flowers to blossom, or the Stars to shine, than for men to be Religious.

But, alas! we are not all agreed on these momentous matters: and why are we not? If we do not believe in God speaking through our Souls—which is Philosophy—we believe, or rather we profess to believe in Jesus speak-

ing through his life: and as the one is the reflex of the other, why are we not agreed, that—to live for the Soul, and not for the body, is to live in accordance with our real nature, and agreeably to the will of God?

There are many answers to this question; all of them more or less true. But the real answer is this—either we do not comprehend Jesus as he speaks to us through his life, as depicted in the Gospels; or we do not—Christians though we call ourselves—really believe in his declarations touching the efficacy of *Goodness* in all our social relations and of exhibiting our *love of God* by living holy and righteous lives.

Out of our own mouths would proceed our condemnation, if Christendom would truly answer this question of his—“Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say?” Is it then because men form a wrong estimate of Jesus; because they *mistake*, or are wilfully blind to the spirit of the Gospel—which is identical with the spirit of the highest Philosophy—that we live *for our bodies* and are blind and ignorant concerning *the deific nature of our Souls*? It is.—And from the same cause proceed all the sin and suffering—all the moral delinquency—and all the social evils of which the world is full, and which convert the earth into a social wilderness that, for hundreds of millions of struggling and despairing souls, *cannot be made to bloom*. The words of our text are followed in the chapter from which it is taken, by one of those sublime foreshadowings of an earthly Millennium which seems to have been the great idea that Isaiah was commissioned from on High to teach. Of this sin-made Desert he tells us—“It shall

blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing : the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it ; the excellency of Carmel and Sharon : they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.”—Then he says, in his figurative manner, “The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart ; and the tongue of the dumb shall sing ; for in the wilderness shall waters break out ; and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water. And a highway shall be there, and a way ; and it shall be called the way of holiness. No Lion shall be there ; nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon : it shall not be found there : but there the redeemed shall walk. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

This, my dear friend, is one of the old Prophet’s pictures, expressed in metaphor, of an earthly paradise to be realised when our highly favoured, but erring race, shall submit itself to the Laws of God and his reign of righteousness. But although Jesus,—whose person and office Isaiah is thought by the Churches of Christendom to have also foreshadowed in the same way—although Jesus of Nazareth, nearly nineteen centuries ago, came to show us the way to the fulfilment of the prediction, and although Christendom, in the old spirit of Heathenism has deified its teacher, and has been calling him “Lord, Lord” ever since—the promised Millennium has not come : nay I doubt if the heart and the desire of the world was ever further from its realisation.

We still halt in the way of righteousness ; and are blind to the blessed Truth ; and deaf to its heavenly music ; and dumb, with ten thousand sorrows, in the midst of Nature's great gladness. The "Lion" is still in our path, also the ravenous beast that preys on the Lamb-like innocence of the world. We are as sinful now, as when the Prophet, in the night of ignorance, uttered his sublime predictions. Selfishness is still unscrupulous, and wrong doing rife, and the Millennium far, far away—deep-buried to all but the prophet's prescient vision.

In remembering these things, my friends, one is strongly tempted to join the affluent classes of Society (who profit, and profit largely, by the general wickedness) to shed crocodile tears over the sins we will not remedy, or to lash one's feelings into useless eloquence, and thus make clerical capital out of them ;—for you know, were mankind innocent, Power would be without a plea for oppressing us, and the Preacher's occupation would be gone. Tempting as is the occasion, I forbear. Enough for the present that the sad fact of the world's persistency in all the giant evils which Jesus denounced—our lust for dominion, and our love of wealth—is patent to us all. I have merely glanced at the fact to remind you of its existence, because during its existence the sincere practical Christian has to fight a hard battle against circumstances. It is a difficult thing to be honest—a perilous thing to love an unfashionable truth, *and own it*. Few of us can afford to turn cheek after cheek to the smiter ; and *none*, so long as there is such a mighty majority of the opposite way of thinking against us, can even *pretend* to carry out into daily practice the truly deific

principle, of doing to others as we would others should do to us. To indulge in the humanity that is natural to man by imitating the good Samaritan as frequently as misery and helpless, hopeless destitution claim our aid, would be to court indigence and beggary for ourselves, and to get paid for our humanity by the loud laughter of our acquaintances and the scorn of the world. Besides which, the Impostor is sure to make capital out of our charity; and the unscrupulous Rogue, who is utterly bankrupt in virtue himself, is certain, if we will permit it, to make a profitable harvest out of ours. As long therefore as our contemporaries who, whilst calling themselves Christians, set all practical religion at nought, continue to be so overwhelming a majority against us;—to reduce Christianity to practice, without which it is not Christianity at all—is a task which millions are almost compelled to shrink from (especially if much dependent on their fellows) and that purely in self defence.

These, my dear friends, are large admissions for a minister to make: but you will perceive I am more inclined to blame the System—and those Ministers whose name is “Legion” that preach up the System—than I am to blame the congregations who take these *really* unorthodox teachers for their guides. But whilst I do this—and I do this because I think the justice of the case demands it at my hands—whilst I admit that under present circumstances the sincere practical follower of Jesus has a hard battle to fight, it is my duty to tell him that, as a true soldier of the cross, he must buckle on his armour, as his large-hearted Master did, if he would gain *that* Master’s commendation; and the

weapons he combats with must be selected from that Master's armoury too ; not uncharitable Denunciation, not Bigot Zeal ; but Gentleness, and patient endurance, and heroic Sacrifice, and all-conquering Love. The spirit of Jesus the Messiah, must animate him ; and he must, in some sort be a Jesus,—a Messiah, too. Thank God ! all creeds, all countries and all conditions of men, have supplied these Messiahs hitherto, and will continue to supply them until the work is done.

The Howards, the Fenelons, the Channings, and the JOHN POUNDS, may be named as types of men by whom the Messiahship of Jesus is continued in the world—by whom his divine spirit is propagated and extended for the regeneration and redemption of our erring race. It is a succession of warriors of this divine stamp that must bring about the Millennium the *Prophet* predicted, that good *men* strive for, and for which *all men* with more or less distinctness, *hope*.

My dear friends, I have spoken of Sacrifice as necessary to be made by us in the cause of Humanity, Righteousness, and Truth ; but in strictness, there is no such thing as *Sacrifice* in such a cause. In doing God's work, there *might* be—there generally *will* be—loss of friends (so misnamed), of property, of many worldly advantages, of liberty, of *life* : but believe me, God is just, and sends us ample compensation : for if we lose fair-weather friends, we gain others, from whom, no storm can separate us ; for things hollow and temporal, we gain substantial and eternal ones ; for a slavery to custom, which we call liberty, we obtain community with heaven, which is Liberty indeed ; and for *sensual life* (which is spiritual death) we obtain an emanci-

pation from evil—a nearer approach to that oneness with God, which is Life that is *Life indeed*.

No ! suffering in such a cause is *not Sacrifice* : the sacrifice is with those, who smitten by the false glitter of wealth, and the emptiness of Power,—*halt* in the way of righteousness ;—who are *blind* to spiritual Truths, *deaf* to its Angel dictates, and *dumb* and *doleful* when the Spirit of Great nature (which speaks not to them) is one loud Pæan of harmonious joy—one Hymn of gratitude and gladness ! The SACRIFICE is *theirs* ! The GAIN is his who devotes himself to HUMANITY, to RIGHTEOUSNESS, to TRUTH, regardless (so far as they concern himself) of the temporal and transient consequences.

This must be the temper of the Millennium pioneers. In the meantime, my Christian friends, we must *catch what we can* of this same temper, and carry *as much* as we can of it into the affairs of our daily life. There is an earthly paradise possible for *individuals*, as well as the greater one which in the womb of the Future, is destined for our race.

He who yearns for the Millennium may create it for himself. We need not wait. But *heaven must be TOILED for : blessedness must be won*. The germ of Goodness within us must be encouraged in its growth : The Soul, our immortal part, must be fashioned by ourselves. We cannot *do* our religion by deputy. The “Talent” that is given us must be self-improved.

From the lips of Jesus we hear of no other Saviour ; neither from the voice of Reason, which is the voice of God.—And sure I am—or the Gospel is a deception, and its echo within the Soul a lie—that all who struggle manfully, trust

fully, hopefully, against the chilling circumstances we have just now glanced at,—to make Christianity—not a *faith*—but a *life*; not a *complicated pretence*, but a *living reality*, will be of those of whom our text declares—“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for *them*; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as *we* have received mercy, *we* faint not ; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty ; not walking in craftiness ; not handling the word of the Lord deceitfully ; but, by manifestation of the Truth, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. *But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the GOD OF THIS WORLD hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*”—2 COR. iv. 1-4.

MY FRIENDS,—I shall need all your attention, all your forbearance, all your sympathy—to-day.—The author of Christianity, whom Paul denominates the “*image of God*,” desired of all things—this perhaps the most—that his “Glorious Gospel” should be preached to all men, but especially to the poor. One of the most beautifully expressed, and most pathetic of all his injunctions to his Disciples was—“Feed my Lambs.” In our text to-day, Paul commands us to be faithful to these injunctions. “Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not ; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty ; not walking in craftiness ; not handling the word of the Lord deceitfully ; but, by manifestation of the Truth,

commending ourselves to every man's conscience"—that is, to every man's judgment and reason; and this not in a corner, not timidly; but manfully, openly, honestly,—“in the sight of God.” “But,” he tells us, “if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost;”—hid to those “in whom the God of this world”—Mammon, Sensuality, SELF—“hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of this glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.” For, my friends, “Those whose God is of this world,” hating the light of Christ's pure Gospel *themselves*, by “walking in craftiness,” and “handling the word of the Lord deceitfully,” avoiding by all means “the *manifestation* of the Truth,”—commending rather lying fables to their *faith*, instead of the Truth in its simplicity to their consciences, they hide the light of the glorious Gospel *from others*. They preach not Christ's Gospel to the Poor. They neglect altogether the holy and beautiful injunction of Jesus—“Feed my Lambs.” Such are they whose God is Mammon; who live for the world of to-day, and revel in its defilements and sensuality. You know, my friends, without my reminding you thereof—*what shall be their reward*.

Paul foresaw what would arise in respect to this Gospel. In his first Epistle to Timothy he tells him,—“Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared as with a hot iron;—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” Again, in his second Epistle

to this same Timothy; he says—"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus, preach the Word; be instant *in* season and *out* of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine: for the time will come when they will not endure sound teaching, but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves Teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." "But watch thou in all things; endure afflictions: do the work of an Evangelist: make full proof of thy ministry."

Noble words, my friends; uttered in a noble cause! Noble words;—and how prophetic! Almost from the days of the apostles this prophecy—*this reasoning foresight* of the zealous Paul—has been more than literally fulfilled in the Church of Rome. To what heights this church—falsely purporting to be the Church of Christ, has carried superstition; with what lying fables it has filled the world; into what mental darkness it has beguiled countless millions of men and women whose souls have yearned for liberty and light,—I need not stop to tell you. A time came when a few of its slaves burst the yoke, and broke away from this—worse than Egyptian bondage. Protesting against its frauds and tyrannies, they—the Founders of Protestantism—proclaimed the right of all men to read the word of God for themselves, and to judge and determine each man for himself, the depth and meaning of God's Law, and, *at first hand*, learn what are the conditions and terms of his own salvation. So came we by our Spiritual Magna-Charta. It was won by Paul-like boldness. It was preached by many a Christ-like Martyr's blood; and what did these true Knights of the Cross—these

brave Barons of the Reformation—win back for themselves and for their descendants? God's free gift of Liberty;—The right of *all* men to read and judge the Scriptures for themselves. But, my friends, Protestantism had no sooner won back this right of private judgment than it proved false to the principles to which it had been indebted for its own existence. It at once proceeded to draw up creeds, and to frame articles, and to put forth its own peculiar "Scheme of Salvation," to hedge itself about with ecclesiastical and civil Law, and to erect an infallible Popedom of its own. Those who ventured to look beyond the narrow circle of the Church "as by Law-established" were denounced as dangerous Schismatics. All who dared to exercise the right of private judgment in matters Spiritual, were branded as Infidels; and the word was iterated by "pious" lips, with such acrimony and emphasis that the word has come to mean something infamous.

Science and Philosophy were scarcely to be named in the precincts of this Church purporting to be "Universal": nor was it permitted to teach the multiplication table in any public school until the fiend that was (and still is) supposed to lurk within it, had been duly exorcised by a recital of the Creed, the Catechism, and the ten Commandments. This dogmatism is its spirit still. The *people* are out-growing it: but bound in its own trammels, it cannot move: it lingers on—not fit to live—afraid to die: and notwithstanding its precautions the Church of England has more power over the purses, than over the hearts and consciences of the People. It exists rather for what it *gets*, than for what it *does*. Divided against itself "its days are numbered." Its own canons

against Dissent, free thought, and progressive reformation will be its ruin.

The laws of God are stronger than the laws of men. The church that shall endure the wear and tear of Time, must not be reared on Dogmas which men out-grow; but on the laws of man's spiritual nature—which are laws of God. All Falsehood will ultimately die out. There is no moral darkness but what God's light will penetrate *some time*. It is not Truth and Right that are everywhere hedged about by the "pains and penalties" of Law. Truth and Right need no such guardians: they can guard themselves. Whatever is Right is reasonable, and whatever is Reasonable is Right. No Institution; no *Church*, that intends to do the divine work of a church; namely, to spiritualize, and instruct, and elevate the moral and intellectual condition of all the People,—*must hope to stand*, if its basis be not strictly RATIONAL—for then its basis will be RIGHT; or if its principles be not expansive—for then it *can* and *will* adapt itself to the growing wants, and to the moral and intellectual development of the Nations in which it is located.

There are tens of thousands of educated thoughtful men, who, because they cannot countenance the irrational things which are said and done everywhere around them in the name of Religion, look deridingly on; and stand aloof from all denominations. In addition to these there is that still larger class—the labouring men and their families, to whom Religion would not only carry Spiritual consolation, but would tend to raise and redeem them as a class, from the degradation and social thralldom which it has come to be the opinion among us, that they suffer agreeably to an

ordinance of God. I do not believe this. I hope I never *shall* believe it. If Christianity has a mission on earth, it is to raise and bless the Poor. This is God-like labour, and worthy of the followers of Christ.

A CHURCH by moral suasion, but by no other means, ought to repress that growing, ever-thriving, SENSUALITY—the natural offspring of SELFISHNESS, which is the basis and root of all *degradation*, and poverty, and squalid wretchedness, and all the wrong and moral evil which environ us on every side; and to cultivate and cherish that *Love*—the natural offspring of Education and Spiritual development, which would in the process of time, exterminate these giant evils, and establish Righteousness and the kingdom of God.

A Church true to these principles, is the true Parliament; the true Magistrate; the true Policeman; the true guide in all things; the truest friend of Humanity; the only representative on earth of God. In the Book which should be our guide to all moral greatness, and to all spiritual good, *are found the* PRECEPTS—and Reason ratifies them—which naturally, and therefore surely, conducts to this *Millennium*, which the saints are every day predicting; but which without a Church faithfully to preach these precepts, and thus prepare the way for it, *will never come*. What the Church of England *should* have been, the Church of the Future—if it prove worthy of the name of a Church—*must be!* It must answer the description of Paul in the text before us,—it must say with him—“Seeing we *have* this ministry, as *we* have received mercy, *we faint not*; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness; not handling

the word of the Lord dishonestly ; but by *manifestation* of the *Truth*, commending ourselves to *every man's* CONSCIENCE in the sight of God." It must remember also, that, "*if our Gospel be hid,*" it is hid to them who, "blinded by the God of this world," are lost "to the light of that Glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God."

It is clear that such a Church must have an *all-beneficent God* as the object of its adoration ; a belief in immortality for its hope ; and for its earthly basis, that REASON *which commends itself to EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE*, and is holy "in the sight of God." For Doctrines, such a church will take its stand on the divine principles enunciated in Christ's Sermon on the Mount. It must seek to be the "light of the world" by addressing itself to the universal feelings, and wants, and yearnings, and inner nature of all humanity. It must be a "city set on a hill that cannot be hid." It is not to "destroy the Law or the Prophets," but to "fulfil" the *one*, and bring about the sublime predictions of the other. It is not to preach "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ;" but must preach the work of Righteousness, and obtain all its conquests over evil and wrong, by Love. It is not to "love its *brethren* only," but to love *all* men and labour unceasingly to do them good. It must not be a pious-looking sham, but a truly pious reality. It is not to "take thought" for the things of this life merely ; but for all these things must put its trust in Truth and Righteousness, and the never-failing goodness of God.

It must eschew the sandy foundation of Fable, and Fancy, and ever-shifting Opinion, and build its Temple on the Rock of uncontradictable Truth ; that when the rains of

Error descend, and the floods of Imposture come, and the whirlwinds of Falsehood beat upon it, it might stand—firmly as the Rock which bears it. Its Religion must be Love to God, and Love to *all* humanity. It must be the Church of those who *have* no Church: it must be the friend of the friendless; the support of the weak;—it must aim to be the Church of the People. Justice must be its watchword; and the inscription on its banner—LOVE.

There is not one Religion for the Rich and well-to-do, and another Religion for the Poor. There is no *Soul* in that Piety which goes into an ecstasy of devotion one day in seven about its own sinfulness; and habitually indulges—without a thought of their sinfulness—in every form of selfishness and sensuality during the other six. Is it not a shame to go into the Sanctuary to confess and get some fancied absolution for our sins? Should we not go to Church—to the House of God—on the Sunday for purposes purely devotional, and to acquire new strength to fight the hard battle of temptation, and to Live our Religion, in acts purely Christian, every day in the week, and every hour of the day?

What sympathy can we have with those (and such there are) who having contemplated, through half a life-time, the few and simple truths of Christ's daily Religion, sigh for the poetic realms of a Religion of Mystery, under the impression that they see all the truth between Earth and Heaven, and that the prospect is dreary: and then their piety fails, because they think there is nothing more for *them* to see! Such a notion of Religion smacks strongly of mere Sentiment, and a morbid love of excitement; and leads to a suspicion

that the marvel-looking malcontent has thought but little of the glorious mysteries within and around him, and knows still less of the blissfulness (through not having tasted it) of that self-created heaven which comes from assuaging the Sorrows of the friendless and afflicted, or wiping away the scalding tear of anguish from Misery's wan cheek. Such sentimental religionists know little of the Christianity of Christ. This religious sentimentalism which sighs for Excitement is a sure sign of the lack of the *Reality* both in high and low;—in those who seek it, and in those who minister to the craving.

I just now alluded to two classes of our Brethren, to whom the so-much needed *Church of the Future* ought especially to address itself, and gather to its fold: one of them was that of the labouring Poor. This class needs especially a Rational Christian Church. It is a well-known fact that the working population here in "Christian England"—the Artizans and Labourers—the Bones and Sinews—the Feet and Hands—the Limbs and Life Blood of the Nation—will rush in throngs, though ankle deep in mud, to stare at a Royal or Civic pageant—to witness a prize-fight—to see a wretched criminal strangled—or to hear some eccentric Declaimer wax eloquent on the unremitted tortures of the "damned"; but that, neither by threats nor entreaties can they be got to Church!

In the great towns this is constantly noticeable. The sturdy Limbs and active Life-blood of "Christian England" will not go to Church!—why is this? What is the cause of this untoward circumstance which fills with pious horror (as often as they think of it) the Christian Shepherds whose

Folds are empty, whilst their neglected Sheep range the bleak hills without even the watchful colley of their Pastor to guard them from the wolf? Why do they prefer to witness a Public execution, on an inclement morning, or "sup full of horrors" in the evening in some huge Music Hall on the terror-moving tale, told unctuously and graphically about the brimstone burning lake (which exists nowhere but in the preacher's imagination) where lost souls are eternally dying, yet never die, rather than go to any of the Chapels and Churches to learn what they can about God, and Truth, and the "beauty of Holiness," and the blessings of Christ's promised Kingdom? Can the sapient solvers of theological riddles interpret the riddle presented to them for their solution by those perverse tastes—this morbid love of unwholesome excitement, of those toiling and moiling members of the nation—without whom the nation would be nothing? Are these men and their wives and children Atheists? I hope not. I think not. But it is probable from what they have casually picked up about God, that they care not to trouble themselves much, if at all, about Him. It is well known, however, that their rough natures are ever open to the claims of humanity. When need be, they "divide the cloak" and their crust with a suffering brother. Not on *them* (as a class) rests the taint of Atheism,—but only its dire consequences. For *that* plague-spot of Society we must look elsewhere.

As the false Disciple denied Jesus when he betrayed him with a kiss, so practically do *they* deny God who, by habitually cloaking him with the qualities of a Demon, divest Him of those attributes of Goodness and Justice, without

which—and the Poor feel it, and enlightened Christians know it—there is no God.

My dear Friends, to me it seems, that the Church of the Future—spring up where it will, or however named—should collect the Pariahs of Society into its bosom as its *first* care.

I have already intimated that it should, in my opinion, proclaim a Religion which has long gone out of fashion—a Religion which has Reason for its basis ; brotherly love, and equal justice in all things—on earth as in heaven—for its temporal aim ; “ the stone which the builders rejected ” for the chief one of its Temple ; a God of perfect Justice and Goodness and Truth, for its daily and hourly worship ;—that it must be a Church of refuge for the Infidel—a cosmopolitan communion—an Educated working Church, for an Educated working world—in which there is honour for its elders,—a rational discipline for the young—a means of Salvation (without let or hindrance) for all. I would have a Church, then, which should deserve to be NATIONAL,—a Religion, which none but the *utterly selfish*, and those who profess to pride themselves upon being *irrational*, could discountenance or reject—a church for *all*, but, in the first instance—more especially for the *Poor* who have no church,—and, thousands upon thousands of them no education, *no God* !

Opulent men, who have their Mammon : Pleasure seekers, who have their favourite Syren : Monarchs, who have their brief day of power : Statesmen, who have their fame : Titled men, who have their grandeur : False Teachers, who have their professorships, their pulpits, and their pay : Commercial men, who have large balances at their bankers : Vain men, who see nothing worthier of worship than themselves ;—all

these—might make shift to pass through this world without a God—as many of them do :—but *the Poor man* who has no God to work with him in the mill or in the mine,—at the anvil, in the workshop, at the plough—a God to cheer him in his miseries, to watch over him as age steals on him, as sickness shatters him, as life declines,—*the Poor man* !—who needs these consolations, daily and hourly, more than any other portion of God's children, and who, moreover, *might*, if he would take the trouble to think,—perceive Him in the floating cloud and the radiant sunshine—might hear Him in the tempest ; might feel Him in the breeze ; might behold His beneficence in the meadows, and in the corn-fields ; and catch glimpses of His beauty—at night, in the starry heavens, and by day among the flowers,—such needers of a God claim all our sympathy and all our help.

In conclusion, my friends, as you would be faithful disciples of Jesus, let me exhort you to “think of these things,” remembering the maxim of the Gospel Law,—“To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is Sin.”

Be not unmindful of what you owe—what we all owe—to God,—what we owe to the world,—what we owe to ourselves ; what we owe to enlightenment, to spiritual Liberty—to Truth and Right, and Christian Duty. It is clearly our duty, as it is our privilege, to search out the Truth,—to conserve the Truth,—and to disseminate the Truth to all. It is clearly our duty also, if we ask our neighbours to participate in our views, to let our “Confession of Faith” be unambiguous and honest ; for “If the Trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare him to the Battle ?” Now, the God of Peace and Love be with you all ! Amen.

*“STAND UP;
I MYSELF ALSO AM A MAN.”*

Acts x. 26.

THE chapter from which our text is taken relates that—
“There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a Centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an Angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the Angel who spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier who waited on him continually: and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.”

From this account we gather the condition of Cornelius; namely, that like the other Centurion named in the seventh chapter of Mark's gospel, he might have described himself

as "a man set under authority, having under me soldiers; and I say unto one Go, and he goeth; and to another Come, and he cometh: and to my servant Do this, and he doeth it."

The messengers or Cornelius accordingly proceed to Joppa. Peter in the meantime is warned in a vision of their coming; "The Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee." Then Peter went down to the men who were sent unto him from Cornelius, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said unto him, Cornelius the Centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy Angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, *and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.*

And the morrow after, they entered into Cæsarea: and Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsfolk and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. And Peter took him up saying,—Stand up: I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in and found many that were come together.

I have preferred to give you the account of this meeting between the Apostle and Cornelius, as well as the account of the occasion, and the object of it, in the words of Scripture, because, whilst it is impossible that words can be more simple, it is equally impossible that any other words can be more graphic and complete.

It is not to direct your attention to the *occasion* of this meeting, nor the *object* of it, but simply to the *manner* of it, to what Cornelius *did* on meeting Peter, namely, "fell down at his feet and worshipped him;" and to what Peter *said* on the occasion, namely, "Stand up: I myself also am a man," that I have selected these words of the Apostle as the nucleus of my discourse to-day.

It was very natural that a man warned by a heavenly vision to send for Peter, that he might converse with him concerning the religion of Jesus—his life, his teaching, his death, his resurrection—should have felt that especial reverence was due to the person of the Apostle; and consequently, that in the presence of those he had assembled in his house, he should fall down at Peter's feet and worship him.

Judging from what we see around us every day, it would perhaps be equally proper to say, that it would have been very natural in Peter to have accepted of this especial reverence, as due, if not to his own personal character, at least to the sacredness of his office, the office of one commissioned of Heaven to propagate a religion so pure, so catholic, so sublime as the religion of Jesus.

But however *natural* this proceeding would have been in other men—in men conversant with the usages of society and of nations among whom honour is by some exacted as a Right, and, by others, yielded as a Duty,—in an Apostle of Jesus, who was himself the very personification of meekness and humility, it would have been *the assumption of an importance* totally at variance with the spirit of the Gospel he was commissioned to teach.

Peter had been a daily witness of his divine Master's conduct through all his public ministrations, and on the occasion we are considering,—tempting as it was in the presence of many witnesses to gratify a mere human feeling, the Disciple proved himself to be worthy of his Master: for when Cornelius had prostrated himself before him, “Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.” From whatever point of view we may regard this act of the Apostle, it is a noble one, and full of instruction to ourselves; as a mere act of courtesy, a Prince who had studied courtesy all his life, could not have exceeded its dignified urbanity. And yet Peter but a few years previously was nothing more than a simple uneducated fisherman, and naturally not the most gentle or refined of the class to which he belonged: he was of an irritable and imperious temper; for on one occasion he drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the High Priest of the Jews. His language was sometimes during the life of his Master, coarse and reprehensible: for on one occasion, when he had been guilty of an untruth, and that untruth nothing less than a denial of his Master, when he was in adversity and danger; a kinsman of Malchus pointing him out as one of the twelve he had seen with Jesus in the garden, Peter began to curse and to swear, declaring that he knew not the man.

But on the occasion of his meeting with Cornelius, years after the death of Jesus, how different was his character, how changed his manner! As a courteous act no master of the art could have surpassed it in manly simplicity and grace. This is worthy of remembrance, for it is certain

that there is no personal quality worthy the attention of a man, of which true religion is not the natural source. Peter could not have been a Christian, far less could he have been worthy of his Apostleship, if he had not possessed, in a large degree, that courtesy which belongs to the *true* man. Courtesy, *as an art*, may have nothing of Christianity in it: it might be, and it frequently is, mere studied polished selfishness; but *the true man, the true Christian*, without knowing anything of Courtesy as an art—as an accomplishment,—is of necessity always Courteous—when he does not forget—(as Peter sometimes did during his discipleship)—*his Christianity*.

I repeat it, then, there is no personal quality worthy the study of a man (and let it be remembered, that I always include *woman* in the term) of which true religion is not the substance and the source.

Viewed then as a mere act of urbanity and politeness, this meeting of Cornelius and Peter is full of interest and instruction. It teaches us that a courteous and kindly consideration is always meet between man and man: and that he who desires to possess this amiable quality of mind has only to become a Christian,—that is, to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God.

When it is remembered that no man had a higher claim to a divine appointment to preach the Gospel, and teach the religion of Jesus, than Peter had, we shall not fail to remark that, the entire absence of all priestly arrogance, in this scene between Cornelius and the Apostle, presents an edifying contrast to the dictatorial manner of many who fill the priestly office now.

Honour is due to *all* men. Peter himself, in his first general epistle (chap. ii. 17), admonishes us to "Honour all men:" not however, because they are Kings, or Priests, or Nobles, or Philosophers, or Poets, or Masters; but because they are *men*. It is mean to be a Sycophant, base to be a Despot, but honourable to be a Man.

This brings me to the subject I wish chiefly to impress on your attention to-day;—namely, How we ought to conduct ourselves, so as to be worthy of the *nature* vouchsafed to us; and, how we can best improve our *condition and character as men*.

In my last discourse, I attempted to prove to you—or rather, I laid facts before you to enable you to prove for yourselves—that, contrary to the received opinion, our *nature* is eminently good. And I should be false to you, and false to the faith that is in me, if I declared not to you that the Religion I teach is based on that conviction—that it has its source in that necessary and immutable fact. If man's nature be not Good, progress in good is not possible to our race; for out of a germ of Evil, how can you have an after-growth of Good? It is a thing *impossible*. If you throw a grain of wheat in the ground, it does not come up a tare, or a barley-plant, but wheat. If you plant an acorn it comes up an oak. In like manner, if there be not a germ of goodness in the human soul,—placed there by the Author of it—you might as well expect an oak to spring from a mustard-seed, as that any culture, or preaching, or teaching, could produce a crop of Truth, or Goodness, or Religion, from the Human Soul. I go further—If man's *nature* be not essentially Good, for Man at least, there is no God!

An Evil nature can no more incline to Godliness, than the river can turn back to its source.

My friends, we must not stand waiting for strength to be given to enable us to be Religious ; for Grace to be accorded us, to enable us to be Good. The germ is within us: nay, it is this very germ—capable of culture and continual growth—that constitutes us *men*.

Rejecting then, as Peter did, all idea of superiority over our fellows, on account of any personal dignity or office (however sacred), that may have been imposed on us from *without*, it is something to be able to say with this same Peter, the Apostle of Christ—I myself also am a Man!

Now, *when* is a man *not a man* ? But first let me give you the Prophet Jeremiah's definition of one. Jeremiah, you know, was a great denouncer of the Sins and crimes of the Jews in his day. He told them in terribly grand language, how Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed unless the people turned away from their sinfulness; and to show his notion of the immorality of the doomed city, at this period, he represents the God of the Jews, as speaking these words:—"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if *ye can can find a man* (and then he defines what he means by a man), *if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth*, and I will pardon it." Now whatever we might think of the Prophet's notion of God, as the utterer of these words, we can have no difficulty in arriving at what was his idea of a man;—it is *one who executeth justice, and seeketh the Truth*. Jeremiah would, therefore, have answered my question, "When is a man not a man?" by saying—

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When he is sinful, selfish, unjust, and careless about Truth.

You will say, perhaps, that this is a fanciful notion; but so it is written in the Bible: it is Jeremiah's notion: and you will find it in the first verse of the 5th chapter of his prophecies.

When is an oak not an oak?—When it is an acorn—an undeveloped germ: in like manner, a man is not a man, until the germs of Truth, and Goodness, which lie folded up within him begin to develop themselves, in the love of God, the love of Truth, the love of his species; and then, he is not a man only, but (whether he so call himself, or not) a Christian. Hear what Peter himself, the Apostle of Christ, says on this subject, in the very chapter from which our text is taken. When Cornelius had related to Peter the particulars of his vision—how his prayers had been heard, and his alms had in remembrance in the sight of God, "Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but, *in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him.*" Cornelius was a Christian though he did not know it. And no doubt there are now, and always have been, millions of Christians who never heard of Christ. It is not what we *call* ourselves, but what we *think* and *do*, that makes us this or that. There are Christians, who call themselves, Mahomedans, Buddhists, Heathens: and there are Mahomedans, Buddhists, Heathens, who call themselves Christians. It is he who feareth God and worketh righteousness, all the world over that is the Christian; and a Christian is emphatically a *Man*; that is, if the Prophet's definition of a

man, “one who executeth justice, and seeketh the Truth,” be true.

Christianity—that is, its pure and all-embracing *Spirit*—will some day be extended over every nation of the earth; and every man, in every nation, will be a Christian; not however by presenting for his acceptance a creed, or by teaching him a catechism; but, in a truly Christian spirit, helping him to develop the germs of Goodness and Truth, that are within him; helping him, in short, to be a *Man*, and extending to him the rights of a Man; and then giving him *the name* of a Christian;—just as Peter admitted Cornelius, on account of his faith in God, and his life of righteousness, to all the rights and privileges of the Sacred Brotherhood. This is the way, and the only way, to Christianise the earth. A Bigot can, at best, only make a Bigot. It takes a Christian to lay the foundation of a Christian’s character; a Man to lay the foundation of a Man’s.

In the manly character there is nothing *mean*—no desire to seek favour, even with God, at the expense, or to the exclusion of his fellows. In the manly character, there is nothing *arrogant*—no self-righteous scorn of other men—with a—“Stand aside, I am holier than thou.” In the manly character, there is no craven fear—no bending to power, either to escape punishment, or to obtain reward. In the manly character *there is no selfishness*, no unweening forwardness, vanity, and love of display; no unbidden appropriation of the highest seat, at feasts and ceremonials; no snatching at the best of everything, regardless of him to whom the meaner portion might fall, or

of him—perhaps the most deserving—for whom this selfishness leaves none.

It will have been perceived that a MAN, according to the Prophet's definition of a Man, and a CHRISTIAN, according to the Apostle's definition of a Christian, are characters so nearly alike, that the difference lies mainly in the *name*. The principle which guides both, is that innate love of justice and fair play, that humane consideration for one another, which Jesus made the golden rule of his religion, and named Love—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” The MAN is a CHRISTIAN, and the CHRISTIAN is no more than a MAN.

Nor is there anything wonderful in this resemblance between the two characters—between the Apostle's Christian, and the Prophet's Justice-loving Man. Indeed, so far from the circumstance being wonderful (presuming that Christianity is from Heaven, and Man's nature Good) the wonder would be, if it were not exactly as we find it: for if pure Christianity be true Religion, and therefore fitted to our wants and needs, it must be exactly suited to Man's nature: and if Man's were not essentially Good—I mean his *higher* or *spiritual* nature—it would be altogether unsuited to a true Religion, of which the spiritual qualities, Goodness and Godliness, are the base. An Angel from Heaven could not teach Christianity to wolves and bears. It is because Man has the nature of the Angel in him, as well as the nature of the wolf and the bear that he is capable of Christianity. He has the choice of both. He may *be* either. It is because he prefers the brute portion, to the soiritual portion of his nature, and lives for it, and

loves it, that war, and slavery, and crime, and human degradation, and misery exist among us. It is because we have chosen the brute portion—which is non-progressive, and reject the spiritual or angel portion—which is always ascending, higher and higher, towards God, who is the giver of it, that progress in Goodness, and the moral elevation of mankind are of such difficult attainment.

It is the choice made, which is our bane. It is the amending of our choice—of being born again, as it were, and baptised of the spirit into a spiritual life—that can alone bring us redemption. Thus, "to execute justice" according to the Prophet, constitutes the *Man*: "work righteousness," according to the Apostle, constitutes the *Christian*. To be Christians therefore, we have only to be *Men*. Nor does the resemblance between the two characters end here.—The Apostle's Christian must "fear God." The Prophet's justice-loving *Man* must be a *seeker after truth*. To seek Truth, is inevitably to find God: and he who thus discovers the Deity is far more likely to "fear God,"—that is, "to worship him in spirit and in truth," than he who believes in his existence merely on the authority of this book (the Bible); or because he has been *taught* to believe in the idea—as is the case with most of us. Happy is he therefore who can say with the Apostle—with the Apostle's humility, and with the Apostle's truth,—*"I myself also am a man,"*—for conscious of my right as a man, I am also conscious of my Duties: with too much self-respect to be servile, I have too much respect for others, to be despotic: and thus, free from the servility which debases and degrades a man, as well as from the tyranny which links him to the savage denizens of the

woods, I live and move, with my Father's spirit, in my Father's kingdom; my being is intertwined with His being who owns the Universe; and Heaven, a present Heaven, is continually about me." Yes, happy is he who feeling this, can say with Peter, "I myself, also am a man!"

I mentioned just now, as a characteristic of Christianity, that there is no personal quality or accomplishment, worthy the study of a man, of which true Religion is not at once the substance and the source. We have seen the truth of this statement exemplified in the matter of *Courtesy*. The golden rule of the Christian—and ever let it be remembered that Jesus, the teacher of that rule, was first among teachers fully to appreciate the nature, worth, and dignity of a *Man*—the golden rule of the Christian is—"Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them:" and *Good breeding*, in practice, and without acknowledgment adopts the same rule; hence, the true Christian is ever courteous.

You will agree with me, I think, that it is *unmanly* to cringe, and fawn, and play the servile Sycophant to another; and that a manly self-respect is a personal quality worthy of every man's study. There can be no doubt that it is so; hence, no man, of a manly character, would willingly stoop to servility; so no Christian—without forfeiture of his Christian character, could exact, or desire this mean-spirited servility from another. Thus to form a manly character, we are obliged to adopt and practise the Christian's golden rule.

Again. It is *unmanly*, in conferring a favour on another, even on bestowing alms on a poor Beggar, to wound the

feelings of the recipient of your bounty, by the mode of its bestowal: hence, it is one of the most cherished accomplishments of a well-bred man, to bestow a favour with that studied delicacy, which raises the Receiver to the Giver's level, and doubles the boon by removing all idea of degrading obligation. As a mere accomplishment, this is the result of study; performed too, it may be, on the Actor's own account, and because it is part of the manly character he feels himself called upon to sustain. With the Christian man, the case is otherwise. He does the same thing from a totally different motive. His anxiety is to avoid giving pain to *another*; not to *exhibit* his *own* good breeding, and thus confer honour on himself.

It is the same throughout. To cultivate the Graces which adorn Humanity, we have only to keep before us the golden rule of the Christian; for then, we shall be sure “to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God.”

Throughout the world, the *well-bred Man*, is only the *natural man* exhibited in his best dress;—the “Man,” *acting*, full-robed, in all the graces natural to humanity. This “well-bred” man, this man of conventional manners, uses these graces for ostentation, and thinks them *artificial*:—but they are not—for there is nothing “becoming” to man, which is not *in* his nature—which is not eminently and altogether *human*; there is really nothing artificial about the well-bred man, but his *acting*: and whenever he fails in his part, whenever his acting is detected, his power is gone: for this *ACTING* of *Humanity*, instead of *BEING Human*, never fails to expose him to derision and contempt: but as the Christian must *be* a man instead of only *seeming* to be one;—

as the graces which adorn *his* character are not acted, but flow out of him directly from the soul; there is no fear of his failure: genuine Humanity has a home everywhere; it finds its echo and its likeness in the hearts of all.

Now, all that Religion demands of a MAN—if he only extend his regard beyond the requirements of Good-breeding—viz., from the amenities, to the *duties* of life—all that true Religion exacts of him, and all that the most affluent can give, is *to be*, in *reality*, what a mere "well-bred" man is in pretence. He has but to clothe himself habitually in his best dress; to appear full-robed in all the graces which are natural to Humanity—to Him; and, whatever his nation; whatever his mode of worship; whether he await in silence the descent of the spirit, like the Quaker; whether he pull the spirit down by force of groans and clamour, like the modern Methodist; or whether he attract the spirit from its abiding-place above, by gorgeous shows and sweetest music, as the Papist does;—whether he serve God in a white skin or a black one; in a Priest's pontificals or a smock frock; he may rely on it, that his loving reverence for his species, and his devotion to Duty, like the good deeds of Cornelius, will go up "as a memorial" to heaven, and insure his "acceptance with God."

THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”—PROVERBS xxii. 6.

MY FRIENDS,—I am no believer in the Millennium so confidently expected by the Saints ; but, having faith in human progress, and gazing hopefully through the vanishing mists of the thick-coming centuries, I *am* a believer in a future reign of Righteousness ; I look confidently for the Kingdom of God. Looking, therefore, beyond the occasion which has brought us together,—beyond the boundary of these four walls,—beyond what is merely local, and personal, and meet for the day,—let us see what the holy precept contained in our text is intended to teach us ; and how, in its truly catholic significance, this precept, reduced to practice, would rid the world of its sinfulness ; or in the words of the Prophet,—would “loosen the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke ;”—making the light which is within us “break forth as the morning ;” and the kingdom of God, and His Love, and His Righteousness, bloom in beauty over the thorny and weedy wilderness into which SIN—but more especially a *Sin which we recognise not*—has converted the world.

Those of you who live in elegant and well-furnished homes are asking, mentally, *Where is this so-much talked of wilder-ness?* Those who have ordered dinner to be on the table at their usual hour, are perhaps enquiring, *Where is all this suffering? Where is all this sin?*

Suffer me to explain myself a little. By SIN I mean that course of life, and thought, and action, which it is the ostensible object of *all Law* to repress and punish; and of all teaching to discourage and prevent,—and by *the sin which we recognise not*, I mean that course of life, and thought, and action, which *causes* the sin particularised, and *cherishes* its even whilst it is most busy with its Teachings, its united-prayer-meetings, and its Laws.—Now, there is a great deal of LAW, and a great deal of TEACHING (such as it is), and it follows that there must be a great deal of what the world calls (and therefore what I call) SIN, either actual or potential—either in blossom, bud, or germ.—The *first-named* species of sin, or that against which all law and teaching is directed, (examples of which, we meet in abundance, in our Beer-shops, Gin-palaces, Gaols, Penitentiaries, Hulks, and other dens of infamy) is NOMINAL ONLY, whilst it is thought to be real. The other kind of sin, the sin which we recognise not as sin (which we find in our Churches, Chapels, Courts of Justice, Halls of Legislature—in our Shops, Counting-houses, Drawing-rooms, and other “respectable” places) is REAL, whilst we live in the belief that it is not sin at all, but respectable example, first-rate morality, if not good and acceptable Religion. Now, this descriptive account of Sin is true, or the Bible is not a book to be relied on: and if true, then the flaunting blossoms which make the earth look so paradisiacal

(to some of us) are only the blossomings of Weeds and Briars; and not of the Lilies and Roses of Eden which claim a continual, an all-loving culture at our hands. Proof of all this we shall gather by a dispassionate and an honest examination of the precept enjoined in our text: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Now, my friends, *if it be true*, that after a proper training of a child, he *must* remain in the way he should go, and *will not depart from it*, it is abundantly clear that Sin, and Crime, and all Evil-doing, might be banished from among us; consequently the very first inference we are obliged to draw from this admonition, as a whole (if we admit it to be true) proves all for which I have been contending; for that SIN (low-life blackguard sin) everywhere exists, and in great abundance, is admitted by everybody; and it would be preposterous to deny it, if we mean anything, by our pulpit-lecturings and our Laws; it follows as a corollary, that to precisely the same extent as there is low-life sin, there must be upper-class or "respectable" sin; and of course, upper-class, or "respectable" Sinners; who, instead of training up the children of the community in the way they should go, have neglected this training, and thereby caused the evils they cannot afterwards eradicate, either by their punishments, their own "respectable" example, or their prayers. It follows moreover, that Low-life sin (picked up in all the well-known haunts of Sin) is the *necessary consequence* of *vicious habits*, engendered by bad training, or absolute neglect; and is therefore (in the sight of Heaven) only *nominal sin*: and that the sin of the upper

classes, who possess the power either to teach the right way, or neglect to teach it, is the actual, or *real* Sin; which will have to be accounted for, and repented of, and washed away by humiliation and suffering, and sorrow, *in the world to come*, unless it be repented of, and something like restitution made to the victims of their folly and neglect *in this*.

So far my friends, as I am able to direct your minds to right conclusions, THIS IS RIGHT.

If these words of Solomon are words inspired by God, *they are true*; and if true, all evil-doing is the result of bad and evil training, and all bad and evil training—that monster sin which causes all lesser sins—lies at the door of those who, having the power to guide their fellow-creatures, in the right way, *abuse that power*, and suffer countless multitudes of the people everywhere “to perish, for lack of that guiding knowledge” they *could* impart to them *if they would*! “He who knoweth to do good, and *doeth it not*, to him it is *Sin*.”

All the sin and crime we read of in our Newspapers, and chronicle in our Histories, and record in our Newgate Calendars, and preach against in our Churches, and reprehend in our Moral treatises, and ask God to save us from in our Prayers—all this sin and crime, and evil-doing must be laid to *our account*: WE, and not the betrayed and deluded DOERS of these iniquities, ARE THE SINNERS, *and are responsible in the sight of God*! If these words of Solomon are *true*—ARE GOD’S—Sin, and crime, and evil-doing, *must abound* as long as *Power* is only another name for *Wrong*; as long as Teachings, and Preachings, and Prayings, *are but the expressions of our selfishness*—hypocritical cloaks for our dishonesty—and as long as we continue to propagate *False-*

hood, which we know to be falsehood, for TRUTH. We *do* know that "God has made all the Nations of the world of one flesh;" that "God is no respecter of persons;" that God's providence is *over* all and *for* all; and that all knowledge and power given by Him, are to be used—not for selfish and evil purposes, but for *the universal good*. We *do* know also, that "as we sow, so also shall we reap." We *know* this from experience as well as from the holy Book. We know well, that as children are trained (whether the training be proper or improper, good or bad), so will they for ever after have the strongest tendency to go. I should as soon expect to convert a brick of this building into wholesome bread, as a red-hot Calvinist into a Christian. *Men are* (in desire) *what their belief or knowledge makes them*: and (in act and deed) *what inclination, abetted by circumstances, compel them to be*: and, in so far as we have the power to *educate and direct* those inclinations, and *control* these circumstances for Good, *and do not*, just so far are we guilty of the "Sins of the world;" added to this *higher sin*, *this monster wickedness*—which consists in the wholesale wreck of souls that is going on around us; and which we have the power (had we but the inclination) *to save! To save*, did I say? A JUST GOD will save *them!* and, at the tribunal of that God, I would rather be one of the *betrayed*, yea, a thousand times rather, than I would be one of the *betrayers!*—for, sure am I that the Hulks and the Gallows are safer roads to Heaven, than through the perfumed, priest-haunted chambers of the selfish Respectables, who die praising God, that *they* are not as the poor, degraded, bankrupt, "publicans" of society are;—who ARE, as Heaven knows,

what they are, by such selfish men's *default*! I see pitying Angels round the Criminal's death-couch! I see the grim Demons of an accusing conscience round the death-bed of him, whose power and opportunities have been used but to add strength to the strong, and to forge new fetters for the weak! Do not suppose, my friends, that I sympathise with the Criminal, *because* he is Criminal; but only because—for its own selfish purposes,—*Power* left him as it found him,—beleaguered by temptations, which plunged him into crime; and because, in the same circumstances, his fate, poor fellow! must have been *my own*. It is for these reasons I pity criminals, and all who are poor and helpless, and oppressed; and, it is for these reasons I respond to the voice, which rang in the old Prophet's ear from the Courts of Heaven—"Cry aloud, spare not! lift up thy voice like a Trumpet; and show my people their transgressions, and the House of Jacob their sins:"—And, with the Bible for my authority, backed as it is by that "still small voice" within me—the *God-given voice of Reason*, which cannot lie, I am bound to declare, that of all the *crimes* which disgrace Humanity, the greatest, because it is the generative cause of nearly all the others, is that SELFISHNESS, which, in defiance of the wise Solomon's precept, has recourse to all sorts of dishonest devices, and mean expedients, to keep the bulk of men ignorant and poor, on purpose to enslave them.

It will be remembered that this conclusion has been arrived at by assuming that the premises we have been reasoning from are *true*—undeniably, self-evidently—true.

Now let us *test* King Solomon's precept and see whether it be true, or false. The first thing we learn is, that the

child must be *trained*. A CHILD! Why, this word "child" demands a sermon for itself! only, one should *be a child again*, with all the warm, bright, sunny, holy *feelings* of the child, glowing within us,—with all its nameless loves and longings, all its vivid imaginings and deep-searching thoughts, all its simplicity and trustfulness, all its beautiful anticipations, all its joys and sorrows, hopes and fears—to preach it! I feel, dear friends, that he who could preach a sermon with the word "Child" for his text, *and preach it worthily*, would make the Mothers and Fathers (who were children once), and Sisters and Brothers (who are just blossoming into womanhood and manhood now), and the grey grandsire, bent low with age; and *all* whose hearts the cold world has not frozen into stone,—*weep* as he drew the picture of *what themselves once were*, and *all* they were;—*weep tears of joy*, as their awakened memories journeyed with him through the scenes and circumstances their souls had revelled in, when their *own* life was *new*, and *flowers* were glorious things, and men were Angels, and God was in the blessed heavens, *beautiful (as nought has since been), beautiful with Stars!* He would re-awaken, not only their *own* tender, natural, earthly *sympathies*, but would afford them a momentary experience of the more exalted and celestial emotions of *Jesus*, when he said with more than a Prophet's inspiration, a Mother's tenderness, a Seraph's love,—*"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven!"*

Well, *the Child is to be trained*. Is it *true* that the Child *needs training?* Everybody knows it, and none, perhaps, so well as those who have yearned for it without obtaining it;

and those (more happy!) whose first lessons were by an Angel-mother at her knee imparted; whose *manly* lessons a good Father taught, and whom the best books and Teachers have shewn (as they helped this training forward), that it is a work begun in *Time*, to be continued through eternity. The *Animals* below us (*single-natured as they are*) require no training worthy of the name. Instinct suffices. Whelps become Lions; Lambs merge into Sheep; Cygnets, into Swans; the callow Eaglet, into the full-winged king of birds; just as rose-bud after rose-bud develop themselves into the likeness of the full-blown roses which preceded them on the parent stem. Who taught the Nightingale *her song*, and *when* to sing it? The Cuckoo, *her monotonous note*, and *where* to lay the accent? *Will-less and mono-natured*, THEY need no training, *have no teacher*; and yet they never err.

It is different with Humanity. Dual-natured, angel and animal in one, *the Child requires training*. He has that *within him* (that which constitutes him a Son of God, and makes him heir to an eternal heaven), which, if not trained and fostered by those who precede him in the order of Time, will droop and fall away to near extinguishment; and (as a rule) *two things will happen*: First, the child will become *much* that he should not be, and *need* not be; perhaps *all* that is *worst* and *vilest*;—*an Angel wrecked!* and (*but that he is still the Son of a just all-pitying God*) lost beyond hope for ever!—Secondly, his Elders, and natural, heaven-appointed, guardians, (*whose own education for Heaven was to have been helped forward by helping him,*) will be guilty (and must suffer for it) of *that Sin* which, throughout Christendom

is not accounted Sin, but which (as we have seen) is *actual, flagrant* (and but that God is merciful), *unpardonably real*. The Child *is* therefore to be *trained*, and “the way he should go” *has to be pointed out to him*;—the way of righteousness—and, here begins the difficulty,—Which is the way?

It is very doubtful whether Solomon himself, the author of the precept, knew the way which, since his day, has been made plain to all who wish to find it. The best way he knew was the right way for him: but the way that was right for him, is no longer the right way for us. *He* lived under the Law promulgated by Moses: we live under a more enlightened dispensation which has superseded it. The God he knew, was to be obeyed and *dreaded*. The beneficent Ruler of the universe whom *we* profess to reverence, is to be obeyed and *loved*. He had the Old Testament (or a portion of it) for his guide. We have a New Testament for ours. The Lawgiver, he acknowledged was a stern *dictator, and not a model for men to imitate*. The authority we profess to follow, was a man full of all the tenderness of human nature, having a conception of God, higher and holier than any who preceded him; a man whose precepts accorded with his life, and whose life was an example which the *wisest* can only imitate, and which the best cannot even hope to surpass. The most self-sacrificing of beings, his aim was to convert men from the madness of Sin and Selfishness; and to acquaint them with the holy duty of self-abnegation, and the luxury of doing good. All his professed followers say *this* of Jesus: and some, by striving to say *more*, become guilty of gross idolatry, and

exaggeration, and say *less*; in short, by this folly of idolatrous exaggeration, they confuse themselves, mislead others, and spoil all.

It is here lies all the difficulty. DEIFIED, he ceases to be an example; but becomes an object for superstitious worship, like Diana of Ephesus, and Jupiter, and Mars; and Men become *un-reasoning* idolaters; and God is defrauded of the love, and trust, and reverence, *due to Him alone.*

Another "unrecognised Sin" of which all Christendom is guilty! and which *is the root of all the rest!* When will men learn that God, who is the author and animater of our Souls, *speaks to us only through our Souls*; and that the great utterances of God, which we find in the scriptures, are but the piously recorded *echoes* of God's word, which the good and pious men of old tell us *God spake to them?*—and we know they tell us truly, when these utterances are such as none but a *good* God (speaking to them as He speaks to us) could desire of them to believe and propagate *as His word.* We understand Isaiah to have been *himself* the writer of the prophecies—(full of the noblest utterances!) which bear his name; and David, of the Psalms; and Solomon, of the Proverbs attributed to him; but the words of Jesus, it must be remembered, were never penned by *him*: we are indebted to others for them; and we must judge of the writings of the Evangelists, as we judge of the earlier Scriptures,—we know their echoed sentiments *to be true* when they are such as God speaking within ourselves, tells us *are worthy of being ascribed to Him.*

The exaggeration of the character of Jesus (commenced by his Biographers, who recorded what they knew, thought,

and heard) has been so increased by comment and interpretations, that the opinions of Christendom about "the way" the Child is to be taught to go, are as numerous as the Sects into which the idolatry called "Christian" has been broken up. The Methodist has his way; the Quaker his; the Presbyterian his; the Baptist his; the High-Churchman, and the Low-Churchman; and the Unitarian, and the Universalist, *theirs*. It would be useless to go through the list; we cannot help the contradictions (the result I take it, of the exaggerations I have alluded to) which we find in the writings that have come down to us: but, taking the great precepts (worthy the inspiration of God) which Jesus is said to have uttered, and comparing them with the *Spirit* of all his other utterances, and with the acts of his eminently unselfish life, *we* have no difficulty, *any of us*, in replying to the question we want answered: for we find the reply in these words of His,—“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father but by Me.” That is (for they are *figurative*, and must be so interpreted), No one cometh to a state of blessedness but through “the life” I am living, “the truth” I am propounding, “the way” I am shewing Humanity, it ought to go.

Now, “the *Truth*” which Jesus propounded as the sum total of all Religion,—a truth, indicating “the way,” and compelling “the life,” is stated in various ways by the Evangelists. I will not take that contained in his reply to the young man who asked of him “the way” to life eternal, as stated in the 19th Chapter of Matthew—because it has an addendum about “Riches,” to which, however true, the world will not listen. But I will take his reply to “a certain

Lawyer" who asked the same question about "the way," recorded in the 10th Chapter of Luke.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and with all thy mind: And thy Neighbour as thyself."

But, the Lawyer, "willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" In reply to which Jesus answered in that—the most beautiful of his parables, which we know as *the* parable of the Good Samaritan, and which, being interpreted, means this:—*Every man is thy neighbour, to whom thou can'st do good.* There is yet another explanation needed to make the truth perfectly intelligible, and the Religion of which Jesus is the author, *complete*. It is this: *How* am I to love any Neighbour, as myself? What is to be the guide to my actions, thoughts, and feelings, in reference to him? Every doubt on this point is put to flight, by his different mode of stating the injunction, and which mode Jesus himself adopted in his Sermon on the Mount. "*All things* whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Now, my friends, if in training up the child, we lay this religious foundation on which to build for him a beautiful and Godly character—a character from which he *need not*, and from which, Solomon tells us, he *will not* "depart," and, if we add to this (by way of superstructure) such other knowledge as is worthy his Angelic nature, and immortal destiny, what shall we have done? and what, *when the practice becomes universal*, as it *ought* to be, what consequences will follow? Jesus himself could never have desired a happier state of things for Man. Isaiah's inspira-

tion never pictured a holier, lovelier, or more joyous one ! You will tell me, perhaps, it is Utopian and impossible. I tell you in return, that Isaiah foresaw it, and foreshadowed it, in words that will live as long as Men need language ; and that Jesus lived and died, to shew men how it shall come to pass, and be an Eden-passage to a still higher state of Spiritual progression, where Evil cannot come.

I say therefore, as Paul said to the Corinthians, (2nd Epis. 3rd Chap. 12th ver.) "Seeing, then, that *we have such hope,* WE USE GREAT PLAINNESS OF SPEECH."

I know the Methodists, and all the saints of orthodoxy, will demand, "But, will there be *praying* in this Millennium?" I answer, "Yes," but the prayers will be reasonable ; and we have God's Bible promise (which I shall quote presently) that "before we call God will answer, and while we are yet speaking he will hear." They will again demand—Shall there be Psalm-singing in this Millennium? Ay, my friends, but to better tunes, and loftier rhymes, and truer piety, and nobler praise, than is common in our hymnings now.

I know there are a multitude of objections to a Millennium at all ; and were it to commence *to-morrow*, it would indeed be a serious matter. For Men formed after the Divine pattern of Jesus, will be religious men ; and then, *all* men will be religious !

But, the Teachers, who, however, do not teach, nor *wish* to teach, would naturally object here to—

What is to become of us ?

All men will then be just !

A multitude of Lawyers will demand in chorus—

What is to become of us ?

Crime will cease !

Innumerable Jailers, and Policemen, and other petty subordinates, and Finishers of the Criminal Law, join in the lamentation,—

What is to become of us?

There will be no intemperance!

A host not to be particularised, but “whose name is Legion,” demand with the others,—

What is to become of us?

There will be no war !

The “anointed” Rulers of the Earth enquire,—How shall we amuse ourselves?

What will become of us?

Of course they would have all to find other avocations; and each would assist, in some way or other, in all the Arts of Peace, and in the extended amenities of a new order of things; and find delightful employment in distributing, with a Liberal hand, all its products, and its blessings.

All the *Evils* I have been glancing at (and which we are always praying to be rid of) *would go*. And all the *good things* (we say we desire in their places) *would come*. “In that day,” says the Prophet, “they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall *not* build, and *another* inhabit; they shall *not* plant, and *another* eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people; and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. There shall be no more thence an *infant* of days; nor an *old man* that hath not *filled his days*; for the Child shall die a hundred years old. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth trouble: for they are

the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass (saith the Lord), that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah lxxv.

But the dawn of this happy morrow is, I fear, many weary ages a-head of us ; and *I have* only supposed the changes (which true religion would bring us) *on the eve of realisation* ; in order that you might more fully perceive what true Religion aims at, and then put it to your consciences, whether you really wish the crimes and sins (which preaching and praying does not rid us of,) should make wings for themselves, and flee away from us, *or not* ? Any way, we need not alarm ourselves about the nature of the changes even if we dislike them, which Christianity made real would certainly bring : for in the nature of things they must be slow in their approach. All we need insist on, at present is, that to "train up the children in the way they should go," or (which is the next best thing) *as near the right way as possible*, is a *safe* step, as well as a *truly religious* step, and is moreover, a step in the right direction.

But, my friends, the Civil, "Religious," and Social state of things under which we live (though I believe about the best, and most liberal in the world) is still an effectual bar to our doing for Education (properly so called) *all we ought*, or even half.

In the first place, the Religion of the Churches, miscalled "Christian," is everywhere as much opposed to the training of the children of the community in the way we have seen they should go, as though the old heathenism were meant by it, and not the religion of Jesus. It follows, that, to be faithful

to our professions, and worthy of the cause we advocate, we must not only do all we can to Educate our own Children, and the Children of the Poor ; but we must do all we can to *reform the Churches.*

Our Civil Institutions (in league and partnership with the Churches) offer the same impediments to the progress of knowledge, whenever a truer education of the humbler classes of the people is attempted—a recent instance of which will be in the recollection of all : we must do all we can, therefore, *to reform these Institutions.*

Our Social Economy, and the code of Morals which regulate it, are also opposed to the real elevation of what it was once the fashion to designate, generally, "THE MOB," sometimes "THE SWINISH MULTITUDE," but now, "THE MASSES," or "THE COMMON PEOPLE."

I wish it were possible, suddenly, to convey to these "Masses" how much Jesus of Nazareth was their friend, and what a balm of Gilead to their Souls is extractable from his Religion ! The "respectability" which is ever the idol of the nation that is "making haste to be rich," is a great bar to this communication. The "people" do not want lordly patrons, but sympathising friends. A few such friends are working *for* them, rather than *with* them,—blessings on them for it ! But where are the *Professing* Christians ? Are they not, with the rest—worshippers of the Social Idol ?

To pursue the current of my thought on this subject would carry me too far. The sum of it is this ; the ardour of the social race for Riches is far too hot and should be discouraged : and the Social idol "Respectability," which

tends so much to lessen the sympathy between rich and poor, should be discouraged too.

Here, my friends, are large fields for all to labour in, for *mowing*, and for *planting*; and *all* might do a *little*; *many*, *much*. Let us *all* do what we can towards a *social reformation*.

To get rid of the Sins of the world we must UNITE ;—not to pray, merely ; not to neglect to pray ; but to remove all impediments to real progress ; *and to train the Children*. We owe a large debt to our Ancestors which we must pay to posterity. Let us pay this debt as far as we can by transmitting all the riches of our love for humanity through the enlarged Intelligence and affections of our Messengers—*the Children*. Let us ever remember that, when Jesus said, “Suffer little children to come unto me,” that he might gather them to His bosom, and bless them by armfuls, *he never enquired whose children they were* ;—whether the children of Gentiles or of Jews ; of Heretics or Believers ;—whether they were Bond, or Free : or White, or Black ;—of Noble lineage or humble birth ;—enough for *Him* that they were *Children !—Sons and Daughters of the Infinite Father !—types of the Kingdom of Heaven !* In *this*, as in all things else, let us imitate the universal sympathies of the ever-loving Jesus—open our arms as widely as we can ; train, and bless by our training, *as many as possible*, and leave the rest to the Fatherly providence of God.

TRUST IN GOD.

"The Lord is my LIGHT and my SALVATION, whom shall I fear?"

Psalm xxvii. 1.

GOD and Nature are the same for ever. The Ox still browses in the smiling pastures: The wild Deer frolics on the hills: The wild rose and the Hawthorn bloom on the hedge-rows: The Lark still sings and soars, and soars and sings: The strong-winged swallow follows the Summer whithersoever it goeth: The dog is faithful to his master, *now*, as of yore: The Sea still answers to the changing moon,—in storm is grand, in calm is beautiful; still reflecting the sunbeams and mirroring the stars, as it did before the flood; and "God's tender mercies are ever over all his works." Man's nature is the same. His life is the same, and the tenure on which he holds it, the same, *now* as in the beginning: and still the law of his soul is progress, expansion, growth; and all must proceed from God. Well might the Psalmist exclaim "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

I am to speak to you to-day, my friends, about this Trust in God. A moment's reflection will convince us that before there can be any *trust* there must be some reliable knowledge in reference to the Being trusted. Before there can be any

reliable knowledge respecting the nature, attributes, and character of God, there must be some distinct and unmistakable Revelation in reference to the high and holy matters from God Himself to us. *From God to us*, because it is clearly impossible that the Finite Creature can know anything of the Infinite Creator, save what it might please Him, of His own divine will, to make possible to us, and, in His own divine way, to communicate.

Revelation, properly so called, is a communication from God, concerning His own Divine nature, attributes, and character, from which we may infer, with logical certainty, our relationship to God, and the moral and religious Duties implied in that relationship.

Revelation,—sincere, *Divine* Revelation—is not History; nor is History Divine Revelation.

This description of what Revelation *is*, and what it is *not*, as well as the statement which precedes it, are all preliminary matters. Two questions now present themselves, which I hope to answer in the course of this enquiry: they are these—

First. What is the mode by which the Creator in all ages of the world has been pleased to reveal Himself to His Creatures? and,

Secondly. Is it consistent with what we believe of the Infinite Power, the Infinite Wisdom, the Infinite Justice, the Infinite Love, the Infinite Benevolence of God, that He should have limited this revelation of Himself to *a single period of time*, or that He should have imparted it *to a single nation*, or *to a few favoured individuals of any nation*—if at the same time we believe that the knowledge so imparted is

equally needed by *all* men, in *all* nations, and throughout *all* time?

I do not say that it has been so, for there is ample evidence of the fact: but I ask, Has this been the result of partiality in the Creator towards the Jewish Nation? or, was it not rather the NATURAL result of a *greater amount of rightly directed earnestness* on the part of that Nation, *to know God, to acquaint themselves with His will, and to live in obedience to His Laws?*

To impute *partiality* to the Creator would be to deny His Justice. We have however only to think for a moment of the ardent and impulsive character of the Jewish people, and of the lofty tone of religious sentiment which pervades their writings—loftier in aim, purer in sentiment, (to say nothing of their having been produced in honour of One only God) *more intensely pious*, than those of any other nation—and instantly our problem is solved, our difficulty has passed away! God's Justice is seen to have no taint or shadow of *injustice* in it: but His self-adjusting Law, has ever been, and still *is*—"Ask what is good, and it shall be given unto you: Seek to know my will, and ye shall find it: Knock at the Gate of Righteousness, and Heaven shall be opened unto you: As ye sow, my children, so also shall ye reap." If the Jews were once a *favoured* nation; they were also *the foremost* in the race of Intelligence; the *earliest* worshippers of the true and only God; their aims were elevated; their piety intense and real. The bigotry of conservatism and exclusiveness was the sin by which they fell. They knew God only in part, and that imperfectly. Moses was their Oracle. A greater than Moses came to give them a larger

view of God. They repudiated the Reformer; mocked him; persecuted him; crucified him; and cast him from them. Then was their Nation humbled to the dust and Christianity was raised upon its ruins. When they were the vanguard of the World's religion, they flourished like the "Green Bay Tree:" when they fell into the rear of religious progress, their prestige left them, and Justice without a shadow of *injustice* again was done! and *again shall they be gathered to their new Jerusalem* when Jew and Christian *shall both be just*—when the Christian shall return to the Theism of the Jew, and the Jew adopt in profession the Revelation of the Man Jesus—which teaches us that God is Love, and that Love is the only Law: for *then*, but not till then, shall both Jew and Christian rise to the conception of an infinitely Beneficent and all-loving God; and together under the broad temple-roof where the lone Prophet chaunted it, utter the sublime anthem-syllablings—the counterpart, and echo of our text—"Behold God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: he also is become my salvation."

HISTORY, my friends, is not REVELATION. There is more of *bane* than *blessing* in poring over the records of the PAST. It is good to have the power of "looking before and after;" but our place is the *Present*; our path is through the unexplored FUTURE,—onward, onward, for ever and ever, on!

There is an everlasting moral in the fate of Lot's wife! Destruction and ruin are *behind* us; God—Heaven—and all possible Good—before!

PAST GENERATIONS saw God (through nature) FACE TO FACE; and held *spiritual communion* with Him in that epitome

of all nature—that mirror of Deity—the SOUL. We are content to see Him through *their eyes*;—to be LEARNED (at second hand) through their *learning*;—PIOUS through their piety;—wise through their wisdom;—and religious through their religion. But are we to slumber and sleep, because bookless antiquity—all ear, all eye—caught momentary glimpses of God, and to us transmitted them in deathless song? Because they *saw*, shall we shut our eyes? because they *heard*, shall we not listen?—Look at Nature! God is not dead! He is not dumb! of His Eternal Epic of the Universe scarce one whole stanza has been yet recited. The beauty of what is told, and the grandeur of its significance, are as nothing to the sublimity and beauty of that unuttered portion—which all eternity will not suffice to tell!—And believe me, Man cannot afford to lose *one syllable* as it falls—*one audible whisper*—from the unseen world, nor from the voice of Nature, which is the voice of God.

Revelation has been always going on, and must go on for ever. Written Revelation is only a translation into the imperfect language of men, of what is within us and around us; the diviner original is in the Eternal universe, and the human soul; only the preface has yet been translated. God, Nature, and the Human soul!—these are the true trinity! This is the enigma, the eternal mystery we have to solve. To know one is to know all, but perfection of knowledge is not for us; yet every advance we make—every object rightly interpreted—enlarges our view, and develops another faculty of the human mind. Man is himself a living epitome of the universe. Self-knowledge, self-culture, is his task. Here is a garden of Eden given him to till;

here grows every tree that is pleasant to the sight or good for food,—the tree of *life* in the midst of the garden; and the tree of knowledge of good and evil: and here is the river, the broad and beautiful river of inspiration and thought, which fertilizes the garden; and here, when we will, we might wander, and (as long as we are sinless) we might listen to the voice of our God, walking in this our Eden, in the cool of the day.

My dear Friends, we see everywhere about us, evidences of the being, the power, and the glory of God; but if we would commune with Him,—if we would obtain strength from the *source* of strength, light from the *source* of light, love from the *source* of love,—a ray of divinity to cheer our path, from the *source* of all that is divine,—if we would “draw nigh unto God,” and assimilate ourselves (as far as humanity can assimilate itself) into His divine perfections, we must frequently shut out the world, close the door of our consciousness on the world’s vanities;—we must seek Him privily in that Temple where He is always present, in that “Audience Chamber” He has sanctified to Himself—*within the secret recesses of our inner being.*

So did Moses, and the Prophets: so did Jesus, and the Evangelists, and the Apostles: AND SO MUST WE. In *that* presence there will be no pretences, no Hypocrisy: there will be *worship*, though our tongue be unable to articulate the thought. *Mere* words are indeed superfluous, for they are felt to be inadequate; and Pride is humbled; and Flippancy is abashed; and Eloquence is dumb.—And, surely, this *thought* that is too great for utterance,—whether it be joy or grief; fear or hope; penitence or gratitude;

truthfulness or praise,—the more ineffable it is the greater will be our worship. It is *then* we feel that God is all Truth—all Love: that thought is infinite; that spirit is indestructible; that the soul is necessarily immortal. We feel that *behind* the world of sense is the *thought*, the *prior* thought, that was anterior to the world's existence; that gave it being; and that must outlive all the phases of its infinite mutations—*itself alone* IMMUTABLE.

It is in these moments of secluded abstraction that we see the divinity that dwells in man; and thenceforward *God has all our worship*; man our love: selfishness is swallowed up in sympathy; and in every man we recognise a brother.

Here is the source of all revelation—of all religion. It is of the soul—from which it springs spontaneously like water gushing from its fountain-source among the rocks. It is the Spirit of God,—the pure likeness of the Father, *within us*; expanding itself on every side; glorifying everything by its own silvery light; tinting every object in nature with its own bright hues; robing the universe, and all that is therein, with Beauty; and seeking to make that universe its own, by assimilation, and knowledge, and love, and all-embracing sympathy. Happy is the Man, the Woman, the Youth, the Maiden, who, sad and sickening of the world of sense (whose idol-gods are Lucre and Respectability) says “I will arise and go to my Father;—in this outward world I am a stranger; in my inward world is God, my strength, my being, my hope, my happiness, my salvation.”

Here, my friends, is Freedom: “the perfect law of liberty;”—that universal sympathy—that Love which is a law unto itself. All other Law is restraint, but this alone is “perfect

liberty." Herein we soar where Faith, with flagging wing, could never bear us: we are already within the precincts of the "life eternal:" we are in the presence of Him who is the source and centre of all Life. Thus, every man lives in his own Heaven, if he have a heaven;—and for this reason,—he cannot live in another's. Another might help him to fashion it; or he might fashion it for himself; but ere he inhabits it, it must be his own: others might have planted it, or have given the seed; but he must have tended it, and pruned it, and trimmed it, and watered it: or it shall not blossom, but be fruitless, at least, *to him*.

It is only after some experience of these internal revelations from God that we begin to understand that phase of mind through which the Apostle Paul was passing when he wrote what you will find in the second chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians:—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit:* for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth *the things of a man*, save the *spirit of man which is in him*? even so, the *things of God* knoweth no man,—*but the Spirit of God*. Now, we have received, not the Spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man (he means the unregenerated or worldly man) receiveth not the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can *he* know

them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

This spirituality, my friends,—which all possess, though we do not all cherish it, and cultivate it, and live for it,—this spirituality is all in all. Consider a moment,—Behind every thing is Thought, Intellect, Spirit, Soul,—the only thing that is indestructible, never-dying, and eternal. All the works of our hands, the things we fabricate, and use, and buy, and sell, are the perishing products of that which is itself unseen, imperishable, and immortal. Our Cities, Churches, Houses, Monuments, Pictures, Statues, Books;—Our Corn-fields with their yellow harvests; our gardens with their blooms, are at once the result and evidence of *Soul*—which is the unseen, spiritual planner and author of them all. The Books we read; the Laws we obey; are not printed books and written edicts merely: these things so named, are only the *outward* evidences of the invisible and spiritual Soul of man, their Author; which is itself away from God who is the infinite Soul of the universe; of which what we call Nature—the earth, the sea, the starry heavens—are but the sensible signs,—the evidences visible to our sight.

Not by *looking out* on Nature with our eyes, and by touching the objects around us with our hands, are these things known to us; but by introspection, by looking inwards—leaving these mere signs and evidences to find the reality of the intangible realities they represent in our Souls: it is here we find God. The Deity can only be "Spiritually discerned;"—not by the outward eye, but by the light of the understanding mind. All good is realised *within*. There only can we

find the great truths which flow in upon us continually from God. It is there we perform our worship: there only that our first, best lesson in Religion must be learned.—And *what* is this lesson? He who has read “his Bible,” and acquainted himself with the grand utterances of the highest and purest minds of those *bookless ages when humanity was young*; who has familiarised himself with his *own* mind; and probed with sympathising interest, into the secret thoughts of those who live and breathe in hope, and fear, and partial trust around him,—there learns, what he, and all men so intensely yearn to know—that it is God who speaks to him from the mysterious chambers of his Soul;—and that all Truth (which can ever be his Truth) meets its counterpart, or finds its echo *there*. From that moment what has he to do with *Fear*? What with the *world of sense*, save to do good therein? The heart can now take holiday. The mind is free! New hopes come to him like Summer blossoms. Old cares fall off like withered Autumn leaves.

Yes, my friends, the test and touchstone of all Revelation, of all Truth, is placed *within* us. That we might attain knowledge, and thus advance stage after stage forever towards moral and intellectual perfection, God has so constituted our minds that we shall distinguish between Truth and Error by one uniform mode or method which is common to all minds, no matter what their education or condition: for without this uniform method there could be no certainty about Truth; there could be no progress in Knowledge and Goodness; there could be no God discoverable;—nor any Trust in God (which is the basis of all religion) attainable by creatures placed at such an unmeasureable distance from

God as that to which, without this link to bind us to himself, we should be (and that hopelessly) condemned.

But as things are, we finite creatures are connected with the infinite Creator by a chain of Truth, infinite in extent which makes advancement easy, and our intercourse with Heaven and heavenly things constant, and beautiful, and holy (to those who seek them), as that prefigured by the ascending and descending angels of Jacob's dream.

Thus God reveals himself to men,—to *all* men who strive to know Him: and these revelations will go on—or the Bible has betrayed us, and our Instincts lie—forever!

It was thus to the inspired writers of the Old Testament,—to Moses, and the Psalmist, and the Prophets that Revelation came. It is *thus* that it ever comes! No Law is violated thereby; no Law suspended; no special miracle is wrought; but an Universal Law of the Omnipotent Creator (which is a standing miracle of Almighty wisdom and Beneficence) comes into play, whenever these beautiful, and high, and holy thoughts—swift messengers from God—invade the mind of the wrapt recipient, filling his soul with the *joy* that springs from high imaginings; the *light*; the *power*; (too often *perilous* that power!) which springs from *Truth*.

Marvellous are the verities which have come to us since what is called "Special Revelation" ended. It was a proud day for man when he tamed the Horse, and yoked him to his chariot, and made that noble Creature's strength and swiftness his. It made him twice the man he was before. We have the Horse still: but we have also harnessed Steam; yoked vapour to our chariot; and thereby multiplied (for good or evil) our former power perhaps a hundred-fold.

It was a proud day for man when he had invented for himself an *alphabet*, and on the rock could carve his thoughts for after times to read; prouder still when he had invented *moveable types*, and thence could multiply his thoughts in books *ad-infinitem*: but *now*, we literally write with Lightning, and have no metaphor at command to hyperbolize the swiftness with which we flash off our thoughts, transmit our wishes, do our business-errands across deserts of sand, and thousands of miles of ocean, to the remotest spots where civilised man abides.

It was a proud day for the children of Israel (journeying in a strange land) when Moses struck the Rock, and it yielded water for the thirsty tribes. But in our day Geologists have "struck the rock," and it has given, with no uncertain utterance, a Revelation from God which ante-dates all written Revelation by millions of years.

It would be pleasant to linger here; but this must not be. We Moderns have however seen miracles performed by the natural action of God's unchanging Laws—greater than any of the ancients ever saw performed by means of their violation: and one of the consequences of what we have seen is this,—we have a far higher conception of God's Providence and Character, than was possible to men of whom it is said, they believed they saw these immutable and everlasting Laws violated for the attainment of partial ends, and for the special convenience of a favoured people.

How was it possible that the God of the Jews could be, in their eyes, the infinitely perfect God of *all* men? He fought *their* battles: he slaughtered *their* enemies with a "mighty slaughter:" he gave *them* easy victory; and they

naturally addressed him, as the God of Armies—"the Lord of Hosts!" His *Power* was *unlimited*; but not so his *Love*. He had some of the qualities of a spiritual being; but he had also many of the passions which inhere to flesh and blood. He was "a great King over all Kings,"—greatly to be honored, but still more greatly to be feared. Like the fabled Gods of the Heathen nations, the *anger* of the Jews' Jehovah was to be appeased by sanguinary Sacrifices; and the Sacrifices were the chiefest, and most sacred portion of their religious ceremonies—and always administered by their Priests.

Except that it was ONE God, and not the chief among many Gods, whom they worshipped, their idea of the character and attributes of God were but little higher than that which Scandinavians entertained of ODIN, and the Greeks and Romans, of their Jupiter or Mars.

The Jews believed in a God omnipotent in Power, but passionate, partial, and vindictive,—a capricious tyrant—to be appeased by sanguinary sacrifices and ceremonial worship; in brief—the fraction of a God, because only fractionally revealed to him.

But *to this imperfect notion* (from which, neither the Psalmist nor the Prophets were exempt) Modern Christians, without the slightest warrant from the Spirit of the Gospel (as *taught* and *lived* by JESUS) have added so *many* and such *gross* absurdities, which, by implication, impeach the justice, and the Beneficence, and the immutableness of God, and in effect, denude Him of almost every other GOD-LIKE Attribute, that a thousand years hence it is *easy* to imagine the Creeds and Catechisms, in which these

Monkish superstitions are embodied, will furnish the fabulous materials of the Mythology of the Ancient Christians, rivalling in absurdity, but not equalling in imaginative beauty, the Mythology of the Ancient Greeks.

If, in reasoning, our "premises" be wrong, our "conclusions" must also be wrong. In like manner, if the fundamental idea of our Religion be erroneous,—if our notion concerning God, be *low* and derogatory—it is impossible that our lives and actions can be right.

What is the God presented to us by the Catechisms and Creeds of Christendom?

Instead of entering on the ungracious task of dissecting these absurdities, let me ask—

How happens it, that what is *called* Christianity is everywhere openly renounced, or only from motives of expediency externally professed by the larger half of the educated and thinking men in all Christian communities; and that the Christian religion in any form, can hardly be said to have reached that neglected section of the people, who comprise the great bulk of the working population of this hard-working land?

Briefly, this appears to me to be the Answer,—Either a higher notion of God than the Churches profess, and reach, is prevalent, and disgust keeps the holders of this higher notion aloof from their *communion*; or ATHEISM, *which is the natural produce of this false teaching*, has eaten itself into the *hearts and convictions* of this section of the people.

Perhaps both causes concur in bringing about the anomalous state of things I have mentioned,—a state of things which the extraordinary means now being taken by

Protestantism to get the people to the Churches, renders too evident to need further proof.

But in any of these cases, my friends, what is the duty of those ministers and congregations who hold the view of God *we* hold, and whose religious teachings are consonant with these views? Clearly, it is their duty to *bestir* themselves; and to do without delay, whatever is possible and necessary to an universal and speedy reformation. More than this I will not presume to say, except that never was a *thorough-going-Luther* more needed than now; and I think the Anti-Trinitarian Christian churches of free, enlightened England *ought*—having the *ability* (for TRUTH IS STRENGTH)—to have the *Will* and *Energy*—to SUPPLY THE WANT.

As a motive to action, I would suggest,—HERE IS INDIA TO BE CHRISTIANISED! *but until christendom has been Christianised*, it would, alas! be but little better than the exchange of *one series* of Superstitions for *another* were christendom (with its present false basis for what *should* be an universal Religion) to attempt the task.

But the acute HINDOO is not to be so converted; for REASON *must be the instrument of his conversion*; whilst UNREFORMED CHRISTENDOM has no other weapon in its armoury than FAITH.

To the Hindoo, as to us, all its priesthood can say is this,—Believe in our Creeds; learn to rehearse our Catechisms; be obedient to your Pastors and Masters and all who are set in authority over you; mind your worldly affairs, pay your rents, tithes, and taxes like respectable men; and then God will relent; and listen to your mediator, and your black soul is saved!

Is it not, then, as I just told you, that the Jehovah of the Jews—instead of being elevated by the creeds of Christendom into one perfectly Good God foreshadowed by Isaiah, and perfectly revealed by Jesus, has been dwarfed and degraded into a mere puppet of the Priesthood—into the convenient instrument of vengeance on the deniers of *their* Law?

Is it any wonder, my friends, that, even among believers in these things, six days should so freely be given up to Mammon, and only the seventh given grudgingly to God? or, to be more exact in my arithmetic, and nearer in my description, to truth—

Is it any wonder that six days and three-quarters of our week should be regularly given up to Worldliness, and Selfishness, and Sin; and only the remaining fraction of the week, to this fraction of a God?

As a last word this day,—I beseech you to *think of these things*,—as David and the Prophets *thought of*, and mourned over, and denounced a similar state of idolatry and sinfulness, *in their* day; for out of this thought shall come the revelation that will bring the remedy.

Religion, as Jesus *taught* it, and *lived* it, comes within the comprehension, and was designed for the hearty practice of *all* men. His *Religion* we call Christianity—and Christianity—that is, *our* religion—is the worship of *one* God in spirit and truth: doing unto all men, as we would that all men should do unto us: walking in the ways of Jesus: living his life: feeding the multitude: healing the sick: giving sight to the blind—sight to those who have eyes but see not: raising the dead, by infusing a spirit into dead materialism: overcoming evil by good: abasing Mammon: driving the money-

changers from the temple: blessing little children: instructing all men: *honoring* all men: humanising the nations: converting the earth into a human brotherhood; sacrificing, if it must be so, every earthly comfort for the attainment of these objects: turning not aside at the frown of Power: heeding not the scorner's scorn: and if need be, dying the death of the great Exemplar, and shedding our hearts' blood, for the redemption from Ignorance and Error of a misguided world.

This is Christianity: and if the Priesthood of Christendom preached this Christianity, and by example, as well as precept did their best to make it the law of Christian life, we might forgive them the heathenish devices which secure to them their power. But this is hopeless, until the false idea of God on which all worldliness, and superstition, and bigotry is based, has been thoroughly rooted out and reformed.

To this end, then, as well as for our own eternal happiness, let *us* trust in the infinite attributes of an infinitely good God, that,—in the pride and hey-day of a life consecrated to a Religion which *should* be as joyous as the Summer sunshine, and as *beneficent* as its showers,—we might be able to exclaim with Isaiah, “Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord, Jehovah, is my strength and my song: He also is become my salvation:”—and that in the calm evening of our pilgrimage in this beautiful world of sense and sensuous things, whilst awaiting in pious faith, and manly resignation, that “change” which will translate us into a higher state of blessedness, and a nearer and more intimate communion with our God,—we might calmly say with the pious Psalmist,—“the Lord is my *Light*, and my Salvation; whom shall I fear?”

S E L F - T R U S T .

“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the Grace of God I am what I am: and His Grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.”—(1 Cor. xv. 9, 10.)

MY FRIENDS, “TRUST IN GOD” was the sublime subject that occupied our attention this morning: SELF-TRUST, is the subject to which I desire to direct your attention *now*.

The extent and quality of our Trust in God, we found to depend upon the amount and accuracy of our knowledge concerning the nature, attributes, and character of the Being who is the object of our Trust: In like manner, the propriety and reasonableness of our Self-Trust must depend on the accuracy and extent of our Self-Knowledge: in other words,—Our Self-reliance, to be reasonable and right, must be founded on the knowledge attainable by us, of the character, attributes, and nature of the Human Mind.

We are enabled to arrive at some general knowledge of *God*, through those means only by which He has been pleased to render the attainment of this knowledge possible to us,—namely, through those mysterious Laws which link our Spiritual Nature unto His.

Conscious that these Laws (which we recognise without comprehending) are not *our* Laws; and that the infinite Series of everlasting *Verities* they convey to us are not *our* Verities, we are thence divinely instructed of the existence of a Being, who established these Laws and communicated these Verities; and, from that moment we are irresistibly persuaded that this infinitely Great Being who thus beneficently reveals himself to us *must* be (because any of the terms includes the others) as Good, and Wise, and Just, as He is Great.

With this knowledge of His existence, character, and nature (derived from *Him* and not Self-acquired) He instantly becomes to us an object of reverence, trust, and love.—As long as Men conceived of Him only as a Being of irresistible energy and power, He was naturally an object of awe and terror; but as soon as the tremendous energies observable in Creation were perceived by men, not to be “capricious judgments,” but the results of Order and pre-established *Law*, He naturally became an object of adoration: and whithersoever this idea extends itself among the nations of the earth, men begin to exclaim with Isaiah, “Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid.”—From these and other Facts we deduced our *relationship* to God: We shall do well to comprehend what we can concerning this *relationship*.

First then,—What is the nature of the relationship which exists between a piece of dead unorganised Matter,—a grain of sand, for instance, or a block of granite, or even of the substance of this whirling globe, the Earth which we inhabit; in short, what is the relationship which subsists between any

piece of dead unorganised *Matter*, and the great and good Being we call *God*? The only relationship which appears to our imperfect comprehensions to subsist between them may be illustrated by likening it to that which subsists between the Human Potter and the vessel of clay he has fabricated either for ornament or use;—a relationship of which the Potter is *conscious*, but not so the *vessel* he has formed; it is a relationship, therefore, from which no reverence, fear, gratitude, trust, or love on the part of the molten vessel, can be predicated or inferred.

Again.—What is the nature of the relationship which subsists between this living, organised, object,—the Rose I hold in my hand—and the author of its existence—the Infinite God? This Flower has qualities perceivable by us, loveable by us—Fragrance, Color, Form; but still, its relationship to God, its Creator, is in every way the same (so at least it appears to us) as that which subsists in the grain of sand, the granite block, the *Star* we live upon, the Sun which gladdens our *Star* with warmth and light, and the systems of Suns which make up the boundless universe;—that is, The Created *Thing* has no consciousness of its Creator; and thence the latter cannot be to the former an object of reverence, fear, gratitude, trust, or love.

Again.—Take one of the lower Animals,—it matters not whether it be a Gnat or a Rhinoceros, a soaring Eagle, or a crawling Worm. Still the relationship which subsists between the organised, living, sentient, Creature, and its Creator, imposes no *duty* on the Creature; because in that relationship, no *knowledge is involved* imparting to the creature any sense of its dependence on its author and sustainer,

God; and, hence, the Creature is clearly incapable of all Adoration, Reverence, Gratitude, Trust, or Love.

We come now to Man; and all is changed. He, like the other objects to which I have alluded, is an organised, living, sentient, Material Thing; but he is something more. At *his* creation "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; AND HE BECAME A LIVING SOUL! And then God blessed him, and bade him prosper, and gave him the earth ("to conquer and subdue it") as a present possession, and a heritage in Heaven—to him and to his seed for ever. Oh, "What a piece of work is Man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an Angel! In apprehension, how like a God!"

My dear friends, I must digress for a moment to say, that in laying before you the simple but edifying *Truth*, I wish also, as openly, to attack and denounce the opposite prevalent and most mischievous *Error*. Throughout Christendom the "orthodox" belief concerning our race is—"That every man is by nature destitute of happy interest in, or fellowship with God: that all are under His wrath and curse: that every one of us is shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin: that every imagination of a Man's heart is only evil from his youth and that continually: that he is 'born to judicial blindness of mind, hardness of heart, vile affections:' and that, in the end, the natural and most just result of all this is, that he will be in death, driven away, in his wickedness, to be in hell for ever tormented; punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."—Having laid this fanatical extract from

Orthodoxy before you—without a word of comment, I leave it, and return.

We were considering in what respect Man's relationship to God, differs from the relationship borne to Him by every other creature or thing, known to us within the limitless range of His creation: we found creative energy and a *conscious* Creator on one side; and, on the other, a total unconsciousness of that energy, and therefore, an utter absence of any sense of dependence on its Creator, by the organised, sentient creature, or the *unorganised, insentient* thing. In Man all is changed. Between him and God there is the same relationship as between the Creator and every other created thing: but there is also another, a far nearer, a far more intimate, a far dearer relationship—which, in its affectional and moral features, might be likened to the relationship which subsists—not between Master and Servant—for that is an unnatural relationship—but between a human Preceptor and his Pupil; or between a human Father, a human Mother, and their Child. As soon as there is a dawning consciousness of this relationship, Protective Power on the one side, gives birth, in the object of that Protection, to a reverential and implicit *Trust*: As this consciousness expands and ripens into a rational perception of the beneficent character of that parental and protective Power, our reverential and implicit Trust expands into Adoration and ripens into Love. Thus between God and His human Creatures, there is a relationship which, *in kind*, is the nearest and most intimate of which it is possible to conceive; and which must ever form the basis of all real Religion.

My Friends, the only two articles of a *Christian's* creed are these:—

First, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and Him only shalt thou serve:" and the

Second,—is like unto it—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Now, love of God is possible only to that creature who has within himself the *means* of *knowing* something of God and of comprehending the extent and nature of this relationship: these means in man are purely intellectual; and through these a mutual intercourse is established between the creature and his Creator; not a gross and sensual intercourse, but one far more thorough and complete,—an intercourse of spirit with spirit, soul with soul—an intercourse altogether gratuitous and beneficent on the part of its almighty author:—whilst on the part of its much favoured recipient, it is altogether beneficial, infinitely capable of progressive expansion; and an intercourse moreover which must last for *ever*.

I fear I shall weary you; but my dear friends, it is out of this intellectual intercourse and this spiritual relationship, that real religion, in those who attain it, must proceed: for the first article of this religion is, as we have just seen, the Love of God—a Love that we must render Him, with all our Hearts, and with all our Souls, and with all our Strength; and this must proceed—not from *slavish fear*, nor from *selfish hope*; but from a consciousness of his infinite Goodness; which first exhibits itself in *Trust*; then expands into *Gratitude*; then into *Adoration*; and lastly, into that con-

stantly increasing desire of a more and more intimate communion with Him, which, for want of a better name for it, we call *Love*.

Now the first consideration which presents itself to our minds in this enquiry concerning the reasonableness of SELF-TRUST—and which imperatively demands an answer—is this—Has the infinitely Good God, chosen to establish so intimate a relationship with a thing of Evil?—*so* evil, that those who misinterpret the Bible say—if Justice be done upon him—“he must be in death, driven away in his wickedness, to be tormented in a fiery Hell for ever!”

In answer to this question, which the absurd believers in a Demon-God force upon us, we have only to reflect, that the Being with whom the infinitely Good God has thus intimately allied Himself, is the production of HIS OWN WILL; and that the means appointed for the intercourse of his spirit with our spirit, are the result of HIS OWN DIVINE WILL *also*.

Premising these facts—which even the priestly Bigot dares not deny—what is the inference? It is this—an inference as honor-giving to God as it is ennobling to his Creatures—that the Being created by an infinitely Good God, cannot be, in its nature, *Evil*. *Thoughtless we are; prone to error; liable to sin*; accustomed to trust too much in others—in those who have a temporal interest in deceiving us; and habituated (though not constitutionally) to place too little trust in ourselves: all this we *are*;—and without the temptation and the liability to all this, *we could not have been MEN*: but at the core we are pure and blameless: at our creation God infused into us “a living soul:” spiritually, therefore,

we partake of the divine nature of our Creator, and are essentially and entirely *Good*.

Fully to demolish *this blasphemous heresy of "original Sin"* is not possible to-day; neither is it *necessary*: for wherever one single ray of God's light shines in upon the mind, this dismal dogma, and the whole *man-made Redemption-scheme* which belongs to it, are seen (by those who have eyes to see) in all their shocking and absurd deformity.

Our present problem is,—Given,—an infinitely Good God, the Creator of *all* things, and therefore of Man, and the soul of Man, to prove therefrom the reasonableness of SELF-TRUST,—to prove, in fact, (what most of my hearers will deem superfluous)—namely, that *Paul was right* when he penned for the instruction of the Corinthians, and through them for the instruction of *all* men, in *all* times, the pregnant passage we have taken for our text, of which these words are the substance and the pith—"By the grace of GOD I am WHAT I am." For assuredly *every man*, who is true to his inward or spiritual nature, *is*, by the grace of God, *what* he is. As in the former case, therefore, so in this,—we have only to reflect, that *the Laws of our mental nature* (which are the Divinely appointed *means* through which we *know* everything we *do* know, and *can* know) are *God's Laws*, and not our Laws; and that whatever TRUTH we arrive at through these divinely appointed means is *God's Truth*, and not our Truth; and that *these Laws*, and *this Truth*, being God's, are necessarily GOOD, and therefore worthy of all TRUST; and we instantly perceive that *Self-Trust*, thus based, (and it is valueless when *not* thus based) is as much a *beneficent necessity of our nature*, and as much a *Duty*, as is our

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Trust in God: for (except that it derives a sort of personality from having passed through our minds) *it is exactly the same thing*. A man, therefore, who is in all things guided by *Truth* (which is God's originally and not his) does not really put trust in himself: he puts trust in *Truth*; and in so doing, *honors* (as much as a man *can* honor) the *God of Truth*.

It is only when men—to serve some worldly purpose—rely on error which they know to be error; or—to save themselves the trouble of thinking, and thereby shirk the responsibilities of thought—rely on error, which passes currently in the world for Truth, that *Self-Trust becomes a legitimate object of censure*; because it is *then*, and *then only* a hindrance to our spiritual progress; a reproach to our common nature; a cloud of darkness to our understandings; a snare, and a stumbling-block to our feet.

The History of the Apostle Paul affords us so pertinent an illustration of both these kinds of Self-Trust, that I cannot do better than epitomise (as far as my limits will permit) the leading facts of his *life*, and the characteristics of his mental constitution: and these cannot be more fitly introduced than by his own words—the words of our text:—“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But, by the Grace of God, I am what I am: and His Grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain: but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.”

I am not acquainted with any passage, in any writer, which puts Self-Trust in a clearer light—whether considered

from a philosophical or a religious point of view—than the passage just quoted from the Apostle's first epistle to the Corinthians. The character of Paul is eminently manly. He was a man of *action*. That which he *believed* he instantly proceeded to *do*: and "whatsoever his hand found to *do* Paul did it with his might." He was no *temporiser*. He was always in earnest. It would be well if men in general were of Paul's temper. We should, for a time, have a great many more fanatics among us; but we should have less apathy and fewer Hypocrites—which would be a great gain. Paul was a man of immense energy and considerable acquirements. Born at Tarsus in Silicea, he was by birth a Roman citizen. His Parents were Hebrews. He was of the sect of the Pharisees, and a zealous observer of the Mosaic Law, which he had studied at Jerusalem under Gamaliel, the most famous doctor of that Age. Satisfied that he was master of the Truth; especially of that phase of the Truth which most concerns us as religious and immortal men, Paul (who was no *half believer*, nor *half doer* in anything) thought it to be his duty, by every way he could devise, to affront the name and oppose the Religion and persecute the followers of Jesus. In him there was no lack of *Self-Trust*. His fault was that he had espoused a half truth which he believed to be the *whole truth*. His religion (for thus he reasoned) came direct from Moses; and Moses had it direct from God. It must be true: it must be entire: therefore, the new Religion must be false. Thus Paul reasoned; and he became zealous against the Christians even to madness. When Stephen was stoned in the cause of the new faith, Paul (or *Saul* as his name then



was) stood by, and was a hearty consentor to his death. No man was more active in the persecution of the Christians than this same Saul. His very breath was full of threatenings, and vengeance, and cruelties, and death. His *God* was a *God of vengeance*, and believing in his god, he was the willing instrument of his judgments on the audacious disbelievers of his law. *His God was a God of vengeance. He knew nothing of the God of Love.* This light at length dawned on him from Heaven: and Paul was a changed man. I am not alluding to the "light" which fell upon Paul's physical eye at the *time* of his conversion: but of the mental light by means of which God may be said to have *accomplished* his conversion.—It may have been a flash: it may have been a continuous stream flowing in on the soul of the persecuting Pharisee like an inundation.

Journeying in the night season on his way to Damascus to wreak vengeance on the followers of that Gentle Being, who but lately had paid the penalty of his loving teachings by an agonized death on the Cross, I can imagine the illumination that lighted up the mind of this zealous man as he heard, or imagined he heard, the Spirit of this martyred Hero thus address him from the Sky—"Saul, Saul, *why* persecutest thou me?"

The nearest way to the understanding of an enemy, is always through his *affections*. The Religion of Jesus is *the religion of the affections*—approved by the understanding: and the peculiar form of the appeal—addressed as it was to the Judgment as well as to the Feelings—had its due effect:—"Saul, Saul, *why* persecutest thou me?" "Ay,

why? Thou wert a most loving and gentle spirit who, regardless of danger—for so even thy enemies say of thee—didst go about from city to city, from house, to house, comforting the poor and lowly, reclaiming sinners from the error of their ways, healing the sick, consoling the sorrowful, preaching a new religion of peace and love and good-will among men. Thou wert a *good* man, albeit a mistaken one—for so at least *my* religion obliges me to think thee! Is not the God of my Nation—the terrible Jehovah—the God of *Good* men? Do I know all that it is possible to know about God? Ay, *why* do I persecute thee?—Thou gentle proclaimer of a God of whom until now I had not conceived—*why, why* should I persecute thee?”

Thus I imagine Paul might have soliloquised.—You know the result. Here ended Paul's Self-Trust founded on the errors and shortcomings of his Hebrew Education. He had arrived at a larger conception of God—which the Laws of God, working in his understanding, constrained him to approve. Jehovah was no longer the God of a single Nation: He was *the God of all men*. The God of terrors had expanded into a *God of Love*. But, did Paul abandon his Self-Trust? No! This was impossible. He only took for his motto—“Prove all things: hold fast to that which is good.” He had arrived at a clear conception of the means whereby every new truth is revealed to us; and he felt within himself what he afterwards wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians—It is “by the grace of God”—in other words—it is by the Laws of God working in the understanding, that I, Paul. “am what I am.” I will hold

fast to the Truth which God has revealed to me: and I will do what in me lies to reveal this same truth to others—to the thoughtless, to the timid, to the apathetic, to the sensual, to the illiterate, to the superstitious, to the idolatrous, to those who are the slaves of Sin, and the dupes of false teaching, throughout the world.

What a noble example is this same Paul, the Apostle of Christ, to us!—His *Self-Trust*,—or, to speak more correctly—*His trust in Truth*, (derived as it must be from the *God of Truth*) *was boundless*:—and through how many anxious years of bodily and mental toil—all of them devoted to the cause of Humanity—to the cause of Religion,—to the cause of Truth;—and through how many perils and persecutions did not this Self-Trust bear him!—“Of the Jews” (he tells us) “five times received I forty stripes save one: thrice was I beaten with rods: once was I stoned: thrice I suffered shipwreck: a night and a day I have been in the Deep: in journeyings often; in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in perils of mine own countrymen; in perils by the heathen; in perils in the city; in perils in the wilderness; in perils in the sea; in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness; in watchings often; in hunger and thirst; in fastings often; in cold and nakedness.”

In comparing himself with other teachers and Apostles, Paul's *Self-Trust* seems almost to lay the Apostle open to the charge of *boastful egotism*. He asks, “Are they Ministers of Christ? *I am more*: in labours more abundant; in stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft”: but the charge falls to the ground when we understand

the nature of Self-Trust—not forgetting that Paul himself is herein our teacher. That which seems to be an exhibition of himself will be seen to be something very different when remembered in connexion with his whole character, of which the words of our text are at once the epitome and the explanation:—"For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the Grace of God, I am what I am: and His Grace, which was bestowed upon me was not in vain: but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with me."

My dear Friends, next to TRUST IN GOD (*which in reality is trust in the Laws of God as manifested in external nature,*) SELF-TRUST (*which in reality is trust in the Laws of God as manifested in our Souls,*) is that quality which above all others enables Men to exhibit their Manhood, and fits them for all the trials, and responsibilities, and duties of life: and of this ennobling quality, the Apostle Paul was one of the noblest examples. You might imprison such a man; but you cannot make a slave of him. You might beat him with rods; but you cannot degrade him. You might persecute him; but you cannot change him, and mould him to your will. He is not to be daunted by Dangers; nor intimidated by Power; nor abashed by Authority; nor cajoled by Flattery; nor circumvented by Craft; nor is he to be imposed on by sounding titles and ceremonious shows, beneath which, in every case, he perceives a mountebank, and becomes more fixed in his purpose to remain a Man.

What can you do with a man who, full of that knowledge

which edifieth, can say with Paul—"BY THE GRACE OF GOD, I AM WHAT I AM"? Ye Despots of the Earth! if ye meddle with such a Man, there is nothing for you but to make a *Martyr* of him, or *treat him as a Brother*. SELF-TRUST! which the Churches decry! and which the State has hitherto done its best to stop the growth of, in the popular Mind of the Nation! Self-Trust! Look at the world and its numerous concerns—so mighty, so multifarious, so all absorbing! and ask yourselves, what would become of them all but for the SELF-TRUST *in all and each of the Thinkers, and Doers, by which the mighty labour is carried on?*—for, remember we are ALL HELPERS *in the temporal affairs of the world*—all *thinkers and doers*, either as subordinates or principals; and each who does his part *well*—if it be but in fabricating a horse-shoe, or making a pin, *has* (to fit him for these duties) his needful quota of SELF-TRUST. *But for Self-Trust* where would be all our Literature? All our Sciences? All our Arts? All our Commerce? The great men whose names are the landmarks of the Ages?—Moses—Jesus—Confucius—Plato—Mahomed—Paul—Alfred—Shakspeare—Napoleon—I speak not now of the *opinions* and *aims* of these men, but only of the impress they have left of themselves on the world—what are all these, but world-wide and immortal examples of *Self-Trust*? Is not all progress the result of *Self-Trust*? If I set myself to learn a trade, it is to acquire *Self-Trust* therein. If I would succeed in any *profession*, my first effort must be to acquire that knowledge which will give me the necessary amount of *Self-Trust*. *I shall not succeed*,—and you will all admit I should not *deserve* to succeed—*without it*. I should

be deemed a madman, and deservedly so—if I expected to do any of these things by deputy.

But, my friend, as a *man*—as an *immortal Being*, having the means of *hourly*, nay of momentary communion with God—YOUR GOD,—ask yourself—What is my chief business in this world where,—as a *man*, I must be liable to Sin;—as an *unreasoning man*, I must be liable to the grossest errors;—as a *credulous man*, I must be liable to be deluded; and where, as an *immortal man I have work to do* (which no one can do for me)—*for eternity*; what then, under these circumstances, is my chief business on the earth? There cannot be a doubt but it is this,—I have a character to build up. I have to keep myself, as far as possible from Sin.—I have to avoid the errors of Irreligion on the one hand, and of Superstition on the other.—I have to beware of Antichrist, by whom I am liable to be deluded.—

Paul has said in his Epistle to Timothy that “The time will come when men will not endure *sound* doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears *from the truth*, and shall be *turned unto fables*.”

I have therefore to separate sound doctrine from the unsound,—I have to detect and avoid false teachers,—I have to beware of those Fables which Paul foresaw would grow up in the Church and deceive many. As the crowning point of my character, I have to learn how to love God—that is, *how* to serve and honour Him as I ought; and *how* to love my Neighbour as myself. Now can *all* this,—*can any portion of all this be done by deputy?*—we might as well expect to eat and drink—to live and die—by deputy.

Seeing, then, my Friends, what Self-Trust *is*, we cannot fail to see that it is as much needed in the affairs of Eternity, as in the temporary affairs of Time: or, to place this matter in a stronger light, we cannot I think fail to see that if it be necessary in the fabrication of a Pin, it must be infinitely more so (opposed as it is by innumerable difficulties) in building up a character which determines our position in the life that *now is*; and that *which is to come*.

It is because the polytheistic, heathen-tainted, man-made Creeds of Christendom, in addition to the false idea of God they seek to impose upon us, and which, practically, leaves us without a God to trust in,—it is because, in addition to this, they undertake also *to do this work of OURS BY DEPUTY;—thus freeing men from all the practical duties of a Christian life, and leaving them at liberty to follow after the devices and desires of their own lusts and appetites—to acquire riches—to surround themselves with luxuries—to widen the gulph between Rich and Poor—to wear their religion only on Sundays*—it is because the “State” everywhere (for political purposes) leaves the toiling millions in immoral and unlettered ignorance; and because (co-partners with the State in the work of government) the Churches presumptuously undertake to *do the Spiritual work*—which the ignorant *cannot do*, and which the instructed (seeing how they are instructed) *will not*—that Atheism is ubiquitous, *and almost omnipotent among us*; that it writes our books and newspapers and reviews; that it ministers in our churches and chapels; that it makes and administers our Laws; fights our battles; paints our pictures; spins our calicoes; clothes us; feeds us;—for your Atheist is a “practical” man who will have

none of your theories about abstract Truth: he knows nothing, and cares nothing except about the tangible "realities," as he calls them, by which he finds himself surrounded—about the substantial *business* and the material pleasures of life: (and to do him justice, to these he sticks industriously all his days!)—it is because of this that the Poor (too honest to be hypocritical) cannot be got into the churches—it is because of this, that Society (beginning to be ashamed of the hand it has in the making of them) is everywhere asking—"What are we to do with our criminals?"

These things *are*, my friends: they are patent to the eyes, and the understandings of all who will take the trouble to perceive them: yet, strange to say, there are at this very time men—*ministers*, belonging to a body of Christians that (free from some of the trammels of the creeds)—*ought* to be able to see these evils, and know how to grapple with them—who are pathetically and helplessly asking—"What *are* we to *Preach about?*"

I promised this morning to suggest a *remedy* for this state of things. In a word, my friends, it is SELF-TRUST on this momentous subject of Life and Death and Immortality:—SELF-TRUST based on Self-Knowledge, and a rational Trust in God.

- Let us talk of it in our households.
- Let us teach it to our children.
- Let us write it on the lintels of our doors.
- Let us engrave it indelibly in our hearts.
- Let us propagate it in our schools.
- Let us stereotype it in our Tracts.
- Let us publish it through Christendom.

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- Let us waft it to the Heathen—the Mahommedan, and the Hindoo.
 - Let us do our best to dissipate the delusion that man is infamous and God a Fiend.
 - Be our motto—Self-Trust—based on Self-Knowledge, and a rational

TRUST IN GOD.

To whom be all glory and honor, now, and for ever—Amen!

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

“A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast,” (PROV. xii. 10).
Or, as this passage might be rendered,—A righteous man is merciful to his beast.

MY FRIENDS,—True Manliness and righteousness are convertible terms. They mean the same thing. The righteous Man will not habitually (and does not inadvertently, without being sorry for it), do *anything* which he feels to be unworthy his humanity.—It follows that the true Man is the righteous Man, and that the righteous Man all the world over, is the CHRISTIAN; that is, the creedless Christian; the unbaptised, uncatechised, unindoctrinated, the NATURAL Christian; for Christianity is a natural Religion, because it is *natural* for Mankind to be *good*; hence, Goodness, that is, universal kindness, sympathy, mercifulness, towards every sentient thing, is called HUMANITY; whilst selfish, unmerciful, cruel men, are everywhere deemed *inhuman*;—creatures more like savage beasts than men, because their deeds are unnatural, unmanly, unrighteous, unchristian; degrading to the character, and revolting to the feelings, of all true-hearted, high-souled educated MEN. Reason as well as Revelation insists on our believing these things; and of our disbelieving whatever, and whomsoever, would direct our minds to the contrary conclusion.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean that, *when judged by our actions* we are *all* good, righteous, christian men, or that *any of us* are such in perfection: but I mean that judged by the constitution and capabilities God has given us, it is unnatural we should be the heedless, unreasoning, unrighteous, unchristian, things that countless thousands of us are.—All *Sin*, all wrong-doings, are *degrading* to us, just because all wrong-doing is unchristian; and because whatever is unchristian is unrighteous; and whatever is unrighteous is unworthy of the character of a MAN.

There would be little need of the Preacher, my friends, if millions of us were not in this degraded condition. The *true* man lives for his *higher nature*; for that spiritual, thinking, reasoning, progressing portion of himself, which in happiness or misery, joy or grief, will continue to live on for ever: whilst the *Man of flesh* lives for his *lower nature*;—for the gratification of that animal portion of himself which after a brief space, will return to the dust, to be seen no more, and to be forgotten utterly.

It is quite possible my friends, to have the *bodily form* of a Man (in which, as the Scriptures inform us, we have no “pre-eminence over the beast”), and yet practically, to lack a reasoning, and righteous *soul*, the *cultivation*, and *use*, and *constant growth*, of which, gives us this pre-eminence.

It is to insist on the cultivation, use, and continual growth of the *germ* of righteousness and real manhood that exists within us; and to show us how this cultivation, use, and growth can be effected, which constitutes the mission of the Preacher. Every adult man or woman is, or ought to be a Preacher. It is the privilege of the Old to minister to

the Young. We need not be styled "the *most* reverend," "the *right* reverend," "the *very* reverend," or simply "*the reverend*," *this or that*, to know what our duties and highest interests are; nor need we be "ordained" by men with mitres on, or by sacred colleges, to enable us to teach them.

The imposition of hands is nothing *but* an IMPOSITION. The most learned and enlightened men that ever lived; the greatest geniuses in prose and verse—the Prophets and the Poets, and the Philosophers of Antiquity, lived and flourished, and wrote, and taught, long before Academies were formed for the *protection* of Learning and patronage of Learned men. It is doubtful, indeed, whether any great genius was ever produced by an Academy of Learning, or a Scientific Society. The greatest Painters and Sculptors who have adorned the world,—who have delighted and instructed it by their divine and loving labours; lived, and flourished, and wrought their wonders long before Academies of Art were founded, in this or any other Kingdom; and it is certain that no great Art-genius has been the result of their establishment. Why is this? Because Academies venerate the past, gloat over the old, and would for ever reproduce by means of slavish imitation, the great things which aided the world's progress once, but are now no longer needed: whilst the mission, and the tendency, and very glory of true genius is to push forward, through new, untrodden, ever ascending paths into the future. Onward and for ever onward, is their motto. Higher and for ever higher, is their aim.

It is the same in Religion, as in Literature and the Arts. *Jesus received not ordination from priestly hands.* Out of his

simple teachings grew a priestly order, bearing his name; and Synods, and Sacred colleges, and churches grew out of that; and these, like the Academies, *look back* and impede the progress of Humanity; whilst pure Christianity as Jesus taught it, would, like Genius, push forward through new, untrodden, ever-ascending paths into a more glorious future; with "Onward, and for ever onward." for *its* motto; higher, and for ever higher its continual aim.

The Pyramids of Egypt, built many thousand years ago, and standing in all their pristine grandeur now, are in the form of a triangle on every side, and broad as they are high. In like manner, if we would rear on earth a structure that shall ever approach nearer and still nearer to Heaven, we must be ever broadening and still broadening this structure *at its base*. WE MUST ALL, IN OUR TURN, BE PREACHERS: *the Elders among us must minister to the young.*

The imposition of hands by a Mitred Priest, cannot help us to teach others, or to teach ourselves; but would be more likely to hinder than to aid us in our best endeavours. "Ordination" is nothing. The *Love*, that is to say, the Humanity that Jesus lived and died to teach us—is *every thing*. It excites in us the will and enables us to find out the *way*, to do every thing we have to do on earth; and smoothes our way to Heaven; and strews the way with flowers! With a simple home to shelter us, and enough of food and raiment for our wants; with an appreciation for all natural beauty *and Love in our Souls for every thing that lives*, what do we lack of that Eden, from which Moses tells us our first parents fell? Nothing! To regain that Eden, to make the earth once more a paradise, all that is needed is to

live up to the standard of our *higher nature*, and thus develop our *humanity*, the essence of which is *Love*.

Now it is the privilege of us *Elders* to teach the young; it is the duty of us parents to impart instruction to our children: and I believe there is no holier lesson we can teach them; no better preparation for a Christian life; no surer basis of a righteous manly character, than the injunction—taken in its widest significance—which the words of our text, the words of Solomon the wisest king of Israel, enforce alike on the consciences of *all*,—

“The righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.”

There is nothing more degrading to a man, nothing more mean, cowardly, and contemptible than cruelty. There is nothing more Christ-like; no attribute of our nature more God-like, than Mercy. “We do *pray* for Mercy,” says the greatest of our Poets, “And that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of Mercy.”

He further tells us,—

“The quality of Mercy is not strained:
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless’d:
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:
’Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned Monarch better than his crown;
The Sceptre shews the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the fear and dread of Kings;
But Mercy is above the Sceptered sway;
It is enthroned in the heart of Kings;
It is an attribute of God himself:
And earthly power doth then shew likest God’s,
When Mercy seasons justice.”

The Proverbs of Solomon contain for the most part only

worldly wisdom. They are lessons of *prudence* rather than godliness. There is more *thrift* than *religion* in them; more policy than real goodness. They are, many of them, too like a proverb of a later date, which is a great favorite among ourselves,—“Honesty is the best policy;” that is to say, Honesty is best not because it *is* honesty, not because it is God-like, noble, right—but because Honesty in the long run, *pays* better, and brings us more worldly advantage than Roguery brings us. I need scarcely tell you that Honesty from such a motive, has not much Religion in it; nor the Proverb which thus enforces it, much claim to our veneration. To do right from motives of *prudence* might enable us to pass through the world with the character of *respectable*, perhaps of religious Men: but in point of fact there is neither religion, nor virtue in right actions when performed through fear of loss, or any other punishment, or from the hope of gain or any other species of reward. The truth is this—When our higher nature by means of a *proper* education, (and this does not in the least imply a *learned* one) has obtained a certain degree of development, we are truth-loving, virtue-loving, and religious, not because these things are pleasing to God, but because it has pleased God to make them delight-affording to ourselves. Our Heaven consists in developing our higher and Angel-nature, in thinking rationally, and in doing right: and this Heaven will increase in glory and intensity for ever, just as we increase in holy longings, and righteousness, and Love. The necessity for mere *Policy*, therefore, that is for Right doing from a mean or selfish nature, is a degradation from which it has pleased our Heavenly Father to exempt his creature Man.

Religion is at a low ebb, when *Fear* and *Hope*, *allurement* and *alarm*, are the Preacher's weapons. *We* can, I hope, love God, and Truth, and Righteousness; we can love our fellow creatures and be merciful to the brute, without any alluring temptation to duty, which it would be degrading to the omnipotent Lord and Ruler of the vast universe, to make! How much better is it;—how much more Deific the arrangement, how much more to His glory, and *our advantage*, that, to *feel* Mercy towards the Brute, love towards our Heavenly Father, and affection towards our fellow-man is *Heaven itself*, and that Righteousness, Humanity, and Truth, should be—as we find them—*their own rewarders*, their own highest, noblest, best *reward*!

It is humiliating enough to sell our virtues, and our talents, and our Christian Services, *to one another*: but it is the very height of profanity to think of selling them to God!—especially when He has been pleased to make our good deeds—when they really are *good*, because unselfish—their own reward—*instant, ample, and eternal*.

Children are wiser than worldly men. Before the usages of the world had spoiled us—that is, when we were Children—which of us would not have blushed with conscious shame, and felt himself degraded, to have been offered anything beyond a smile of approbation, in return for a good deed; for an heroic action, the saving perhaps the life of a comrade at the risk of his own? When Jesus called to himself little Children—you remember what he said of them?—"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!" How great is this saying!—but Jesus further said—"Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein."

Need I make the application? I think not. Children are wiser than worldly men, their spotless instincts are truer; and their thoughts are heavenlier.

My dear friends, such of us as have forgotten the generous, heavenly, instincts of the child, must indeed, be born again!—Now most children who do not receive what is called an education are spoiled by the time they can talk; and *all* as soon as they enter what is called the world. Then they become *mercenary*, both in their intercourse with men, and in their intercourse with Heaven: and we must become children again in spirit—we must feel all their generous ardour, and all their unselfish trust in God, before we can be—what we ought to be and must be—their *teachers* in all that pertains to the character of Christian Men. There must be no mean worldliness in the injunction by which we hope to build up a religious character in the Children, who will in their turn have to teach Christianity when we are gone.

The injunction contained in the words of our text—"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast"—unlike many of the Proverbs to which I have alluded, has no selfish or mere worldly policy in it. It does not say to the owner of a beast—"Treat it well and it shall be the better for thee:" but it declares this general truth—that *all* unmercifulness, *all* *cruelty*, whether to man or beast, is inconsistent with *righteousness*, and an abuse of the *Power* (that glorious attribute of Himself) which it has pleased God to confer on His creature Man. With this delegated power from God, we are absolute sovereigns over the lower animals. If over these creatures, that are incapable of sin, we play the tyrant, and have no pity; with what shew of justice can we, who sin continually,

look up to Him for pity, whose delegated attribute of Power, we *thoughtlessly*, or perhaps *wantonly*, abuse? That we are *capable of sin* is a fact, *not to sigh over*, but to be thankful for. It is a pre-eminence which has no peril in it, if, with the power that renders us capable of sin, we cultivate that other attribute of God which should accompany it—I mean clemency, loving-kindness, *Mercy*. This is the meaning of the Apostle when he declares that “Charity covereth a multitude of sins.” We are therefore admonished by Solomon—by a *Few*, mark you, whose system of Religion as set forth in the Bible, is not remarkable for its humanity—that *universal kindness is an universal duty*.—But Solomon, like his father David, was a *Poet*. Read his “Song,” and observe how it teems with tenderness and beauty!

The PRIEST revels in sacrifice! His altar reeks with blood! He sprinkles blood on the people and calls this sanguinary sprinkling an atonement. But the Poet is ever in advance of the Priesthood, and Solomon was a Poet. In all ages of the world the Poet has been remarkable for his humanity. Conspicuous in his Diadem of Power blazes the jewel, *Mercy*. Our own Cowper—not a *great* Poet certainly, but a *good man*—a man who had studied the sacred page as few of us have studied it, says in his “Task,”—

“I would not enter on my list of friends,
(Though grac’d with polished manners and fine sense
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush a snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has *humanity*, forewarned,
Will step aside and let the reptile live.”

My Dear Friends,—I repeat what I said before—there is no lesson we can teach the young holier than this,—That the life of the meanest thing that crawls upon the ground is sacred in the sight of Him who gave *its* life and *ours*, and fitted each for enjoyment.

Tell me not that such sympathetic culture would breed effeminacy in our race; and that men would *weep* when Duty, public or private, might with the trumpet blast of war salute our ears. There cannot be a greater error. The *cruel* are always *cowards*: whilst well nurtured, gentle hearted, generous, souls, are always *brave*. The growth of intelligence amongst a people always sets aside and puts down by the force of its moral power all public exhibitions of barbarity. Cock-fighting and Bull-baiting are out of date; and we go to Lectures, and Concerts, and Oratorios instead. But are Englishmen less *brave*, because less *barbarous* than of yore? When the cause of Humanity needs defenders; when Despotism would set its iron heel on the liberties of mankind; are Englishmen found less chivalrous in soul, less animated by the hatred of oppression, and by the love of Truth, and Right, and Freedom, than when the Bull-ring, the Prize-ring, and the Cock-pit were falsely supposed to minister to our manhood and keep our courage warm? The fields of Inkerman and Alma are England's eloquent reply.

This is not urged, be it remembered, in defence of war; but only in proof that, as long as war is felt to be a necessity, and education which imparts a tone of tenderness and refinement to the young—whatever their condition in life—which weans their minds from gross pleasures and cruelty in all its phases, by no means disqualifies them for the

sternest duties of the citizen, whenever a just occasion might sanctify a recourse to the sword in defence of the best interests of our common humanity.

That such occasions, and on the most favourable circumstances, will continue to arise for centuries to come, cannot, I think, be doubted by any reasonable mind. Opposing "moral resistance" to the machinations of Men who set all morality at defiance—turning cheek after cheek to the smiter, or trying to reason them out of wrong-doing who with arms in their hands, have the *will*, and believe they have the *power*, to perpetrate injustice; these are but the amiable dreams of enthusiasts who interpret scripture too literally; who would reap where they have not sown, who expect to gather grapes off thorns, and figs off thistles, and *not* of men who know that *human animals have no consciences*, and that it is, and always has been the trick of villany, to turn other men's virtue to its own advantage.

No my friends, though war is a dreadful evil, and a disgrace to our Humanity; there are circumstances under which Peace would be a more wide-spread evil and a greater disgrace to us than war. In all such cases I believe that Despotism has no foe so formidable as that large hearted Philanthropy, which, whilst it would not needlessly cause pain to an insect, will not tamely suffer Tyrants to baffle the intentions of Providence, by entailing degradation, and inflicting misery on man. It is because his soul over-flows with *sympathy*—not because he is *cruel*, but because he is *kind*—that the Righteous man unsheathes the sword and grows ruthless in defence of Right—but no sooner has victory crowned his efforts, than the roused Lion is a Lamb again,

and, for his prostrate foe *he feels the compassion of a friend.*

If, then, we would exterminate all slavery, and everything that is unchristian, from the world; if we would baffle the Despotism that writes catechisms, misinterprets the Bible, panders to brutality, and hinders the upward progress of mankind in righteousness and spiritual growth, we must teach the young to be kind and compassionate to the animals over whom the Creator has given us pre-eminence and entrusted us with Power.

Repugnance to cruelty; a recognition of the universal sacredness of life; Generosity that has no self-seeking in it; Goodness that scorns reward—these are the seeds, the pregnant seeds of that vital practical Christianity, that has lain dormant in the world, except here and there, and at distant intervals, *since the time of Christ.*

Scatter them, my friends; scatter them broadcast on the virgin soil of the infant minds around you; and doubt not, but a crop of manliness, a crop of righteousness, a crop of Christianity—a Christianity for the working-days, as well as for the Sabbaths—will spring up and ultimately outgrow the briers and thorns which render the world a painful and rugged world for all but the well-buskin'd wayfarers to walk in *now*: Scatter them, and a rich harvest of holiness and happiness, and beauty, will yet be reaped, by us and others, in this life, and a richer in the life to come: Scatter them with a liberal hand, and doubt not but God, the God of Truth, and Righteousness, will bless and sanctify your pious labours. Amen.

THY KINGDOM COME!

In the 8th 9th and 10th verses of the 6th Chapter of the Gospel of Jesus as rendered by the Evangelist Matthew—it is written, “Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.”

THERE is no portion of the truly divine teaching of Jesus *with which we are more familiar* than the passage I have selected as the basis of my discourse to-day. I need not say that the words *selected* form a *portion* (and I hope to show you that they are the *essential* portion) of that brief but all-comprehending formula, known as the “Lord’s prayer.”

It is my intention herein to say something of PRAYER *generally*; of THIS PRAYER in *particular*: and more especially—so far as time permits, and the needful spirit and power of divine illumination serve me—to make comprehensible to such as need it, the full meaning of the KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH, for which, in this formulary, we are instructed and admonished to *pray*:—TO PRAY that is, to STRIVE FOR, *as our Guide and Teacher strove for it*; to LIVE AND DIE FOR, *as for the same Kingdom, JESUS lived and died*.

The substance of what I wished to say concerning PRAYER

IN GENERAL is already anticipated by the explanation with which I concluded the last sentence.

When Jesus taught his disciples *how* to pray and *what* to pray for, Science had not yet revealed to the world that "God is no respecter of persons;" that His care for all His creatures without distinction, has anticipated all our wants, and provided for them, from all eternity; and that His answer to all our rational prayers is through (and *only* through) the constant operation of His UNVARYING LAWS: hence, after cautioning them against vain, ignorant and hypocritical praying, he said, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him," and the Apostle Peter, who had listened to these admonitions as they fell from the lips of Jesus, exclaimed, on meeting with the good Cornelius, (Acts 10th ch. and 24th vr.) as though the *verification* of the fact was new to him, though the idea must have been familiar, "Of a truth *I perceive* that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, *he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is ACCEPTED* with Him."

These things were not *then* known as they are *now* known, through the revelations which Science is making to us every day: and the *Greatness*, as well as the *Goodness*, of Jesus,—his *Philosophy*, as well as his *Piety*, are rendered more and more apparent to us the more we study his character and teachings.

God is no respecter of persons: with a Father's care, and a Father's natural impartiality, He has provided for all our necessities, whether of the body or the spirit; and to all our prayers and petitions has this one answer—OBEY MY LAWS! MY BLESSINGS ARE FOR ALL MY CHILDREN, OF EVERY

NATION, WHO LOVETH ME AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS:—
TO EVERY ONE WHO KNOWETH MY WILL, AND DOETH
IT.

Then what is Prayer, against which we are warned there may be overmuch; as well as that it might be *vain*, because unreasonable; and *profitless*, because insincere? It is, my friends, a solemn pledge—a league and covenant with God, our Father, that we will do our utmost for the accomplishment of the Desire of which our prayer is the Expression.

Thus, if we pray to be delivered from temptation, we pledge ourselves to *resist* temptation. If we pray that He will give us our daily bread, we pledge ourselves that we will do our utmost, and in the way we believe most pleasing to Him, to *procure* our daily bread. And if we pray that God's Kingdom might come, we pledge ourselves to do whatever in us lies, to bring about His Kingdom. A very serious and solemn thing is Prayer. It is a covenant we voluntarily make with God;—a covenant which by obeying His unchangeable Laws, and doing His righteous will, ourselves only can accomplish.

Rational Prayer is not therefore a presumptuous prompting of God, to do this or that; but a solemn covenant the Suppliant enters into, or from time to time renews with God, that he (the Suppliant) will do his utmost to promote the accomplishment of the thing, or state of things, for which he prays; and this, not because he expects direct or supernatural aid from Heaven to enable him to do it; but from the fact, that thus voluntarily entering into this covenant with his God, he might thereby acquire for himself a spiritual strength and power, the better to compass the object of his Prayer.

It is in this sense alone that there can be any efficacy in Prayer; *but in this sense, it has much.*

Thousands are weaned, we are told, from the degrading vice of Drunkenness by the "pledge" they enter into with their fellowmen. In courts of Justice, the more solemn pledge—not with *men*, merely, but with God—a pledge that he will speak the truth—is exacted of every witness; because it is hoped and believed, that with this obligation operating on their consciences, even reluctant, and interested witnesses might be constrained to be truthful, whatever consequences (to themselves or others) might result. Far greater, my dear friends, should be the amount of spiritual strength, whether to *do* or to *suffer*, obtainable from an unfaltering trust in God's goodness, and from the *voluntary pledge*, which is the essence of every reasonable and heart-felt Prayer.

If our Prayer be only a pretence, then is God mocked; but if sincere, and capable of being accomplished without a miracle, (for by a miracle it will *not* be accomplished though a kneeling world should ask it) *then* may we rest assured that God is with us, and will strengthen us in our efforts to fulfil our pledge; that is—if it be *reasonable and righteous in its aim.*

Take any view you will of prayer, it is a very solemn act. Take *this* view (which I believe to be the Gospel view) and it is an act involving great responsibilities. There is no privilege more abused than this privilege of Prayer. Jesus thought so, when he prohibited "much praying" and taught his Disciples the all-comprehending formula we are now considering. He saw that men made social and sacerdotal capital out of Prayer;—prayed "standing in the Synagogues,

and in the corners of the Streets, *that they might* be seen of men." But this is rather, in those who use it, a proof of Atheism, and a mockery of God, than an *abuse* of the privilege of Prayer. We *abuse* this privilege when our petition is frivolous, or when it is selfish, or when superstitious, or derogatory to the character of God, or inconsistent with the well-known operation of His Laws.

Some men are said to have the "gift" of Prayer. But whether a gift or an acquisition, there are some who use the power with a fluency so daring—with a flippancy so irreverently familiar—as absolutely to shock the sensibilities of those who think (and I am one of them) that God, though he has permitted us to call him Father, is not to be entreated after the fashion of a bullying Barrister's address to a Jury at the Old Bailey.—Others whom I have heard, work themselves up into a frenzied paroxysm of prayerful piety, as though they would take Heaven by storm; exhibiting in these prayerful moments, a power of Will, and strength of perseverance which, if employed in obtaining for themselves and others, rational blessings in the way it has pleased our heavenly Father that we might secure them, would indeed (for of their sincerity, I feel no doubt) be benefactors and blessings to their fellow men. But instead of this, it is generally *their own souls* about which they feel so much anxious and terrifying solicitude; forgetful of the simple precepts of the Gospel, which teach that it is by acts of benevolent consideration *for others*, rather than for ourselves, that the steep ascent of Heaven shall be scaled, and God's Kingdom won.

All such, my dear friends, mistake the pure, practical, self-sacrificing, spirit of the Gospel, and *abuse* (though perhaps they know it not) the privilege of Prayer.—All genuine Prayer implies a *pledge*—a covenant made, and from time to time renewed, with our God, that we will strive “without ceasing” to do His will, and love our brethren, as He, our Heavenly Father, loveth us: so that *praying* means *doing*; the sense in which the Apostle uses it when he enjoins his fellow Christians to “pray always,” —“to pray without ceasing.”

In this sense—and it is the highest—Jesus was the PERFECT PERSONIFICATION OF A LIFE-LONG PRAYER; THE LIVING ANTHEM, at whose advent it is feigned the Angels sung in Bethany, “*Glory to God in the Highest and on earth—Peace; and Goodwill towards men!*”

On this ill-understood subject of Prayer, I am therefore justified in saying to you, my friends, what Jesus, with the self-same object in view, said to his Disciples:—“When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the Heathen do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him. After this manner pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

It may seem a singular question for one addressing you from this place to ask, but I feel constrained to ask it notwithstanding,—Have we ever duly considered the import of these words? Have we, when we use these *familiar*, though solemn words in our daily prayers, an adequate conception

of that for which we petition?—OF GOD'S KINGDOM—which we pray, might come?

It might be new to you that a Prayer is a *solemn pledge* implying, first, that we know for what we are asking; and secondly, that it is good and right to ask it; and thirdly, (which is the test of our sincerity) that we will do what in us lies to make our *wish* a *fact*—that we will be, in short, the willing instruments, under God, for its accomplishment. It may be new to some, and perhaps a little startling, that *Askers* must be *Doers*, if they would have their prayers granted. For instance, if we ask for Spiritual Light; we must *seek* it, with all our Souls, by the study and contemplation of Spiritual things: If we ask for intellectual power; we must strive to obtain it by toil and intelligence or it will not come. If we ask that a pestilence which is depopulating our neighbourhood, should cease, *we must set about removing the causes of it*, or the pest will go on depopulating until the grim Destroyer shall sheathe his shadowy sword for “lack of argument,”—that is, *for lack of victims*, as Locusts die, when every blade of grass, and all green things, have been devoured!

But, do not mistake me, my dear friends. If God leave all this work for His intelligent and moral creatures to do, it is not that He is away on His solitary throne in the depths of His infinite creation, and does not *heed*, or cannot *hear* us;—but it is that we, His intellectual and moral creatures, were called into being *to do this especial work*—to the end, that we might grow better, happier, nobler, and more god-like, by the labour: and whenever we *feel* that *our Prayers are PLEDGES—pledges*—of our desire *that what we pray for*

should come to pass, through our instrumentality—as all sincere and rational prayers are—then we may be sure that the Spirit of God will work with us, and bless us, and strengthen us in the happiness-giving labour of its accomplishment.

Now, in this PRAYER OF PRAYERS—which is *truly divine in its conception*, because so all-comprehensive in its aim, and so universally applicable to the nature and wants of all humanity—in this PRAYER OF PRAYERS, we pray, that GOD'S KINGDOM MIGHT COME!—and this, as a little reflection will convince you, is the *sum* and *substance*, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, of this prayer.

I ask again, Have we ever considered the import of these words? Have we any adequate conception of what it is, which we voluntarily pledge ourselves so far as in us lies, *to bring about*, when we devoutly address ourselves to God, our Father, and say, "THY KINGDOM COME!"

As it is possible some of us may not be able to answer these questions in the affirmative, I shall attempt in the present address to elucidate the true meaning of this prayer, and draw thence, for the general benefit, what instruction it contains.

I may (partially or wholly) *succeed* in this attempt, or I may (partially if not wholly) *fail*: but in this, as in all things, God's will be done!

First, it will be remarked, it is by the parental title of FATHER, which is naturally one of affection and respect, that we are admonished to address "HIM in whom we live, and breathe, and have our being," we are to say—"Our Father"; that is, not the Father of Jesus merely, but *your* Father, and *my* Father, and *the Father of all men*; in brief, the universal

Father of all beings who are capable of rising to the conception of ONE omnipotent, omni-beneficent, omnipresent, GOD. The Father of all beings capable of GOODNESS; that is, capable of Reason, and its necessary concomitant, Free-will. He is the GOD of ALL CREATION, animate or inanimate, rational or brute; but He is the All-beneficent FATHER of MEN.

In our forgetfulness of what we *are*, in our thoughtless ignorance of our heavenly birthright, many of us would think ourselves to be *somebodies* could we trace our descent from some *ruffian Baron*—some titled Sycophant—*some tyrant serving Duke*; but this formula of Jesus is intended to remind us, at morning-tide, and even-tide, at noon-day, and at night that the lowliest-born among us,—the poorest Labourers in common with the richest “Lords,” are the veritable SONS OF GOD:—Sons and Daughters of Him who *made* the Universe,—that Universe which Human Tyrants do their best to *mar*!—CHILDREN of Him, “who covereth Himself with Light as with a garment; who stretcheth out the Heavens like a curtain; who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds His chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind.”

It tells us that we have a Father in *Heaven*; and our yearning souls assures us it is true.

And *where* is *Heaven*?

Heaven is where God is; and God is everywhere!

It is GOODNESS *that makes Heaven*, whether in the homesteads of this green Earth; or in the depths of space where wandering Fancy soars until it sinks bewildered among the “thick sown glories” of yon “field of fire.”

Whithersoever we soar in Fancy, *there is Goodness*;—and there is its Author, *Our Father*, GOD! How natural then is the pious epiphonema of our prayer—HALLOWED BE THY NAME!

Then follows our petition, a prayer which comprehends everything that we, the Sons and Daughters of God, can ask of our all-beneficent Father,—“*THY KINGDOM COME!*” And although we are instructed to add, “*THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN,*” these words make no addition to the prayer, but serve only to *vary* and *explain* it.

Our Father’s KINGDOM will be established here on earth when we obey His sovereign *Laws*, and do His sovereign *Will*;—when we create a Heaven for ourselves by serving Him as we ought; by loving each other in act and deed; in equal and impartial laws; in affectionate and mutual help; and in *all* things—as in all things we are constrained by the natural laws of our being—to love ourselves.

It is therefore the coming of GOD’S KINGDOM,—for His reign of Peace, and Love, and Righteousness on Earth, that we are admonished to pray; whilst at the same time we are taught (what unprejudiced *Reason* also teaches) that the mode of bringing about this reign of Righteousness, is by the universal submission of men to the happiness-giving “will” of God. Under His beneficent dispensation “our daily bread” would come with each rising sun; and peaceful sleep, and happy dreams, and holy aspirations, and love in our souls for everything capable of feeling and reciprocating that love, would come to bless us with every setting of that self-same sun. Earth hath not seen, nor the mind of man conceived, *the blessedness of that Kingdom of God for which*

the best and bravest of our Brethren taught us to pray! It is the prototype—the sublunary pattern—of that higher and holier Kingdom of our Father which awaits His wisely-obedient children in every successive stage of an existence that can never end.

To obey God's Laws we must *know* them: and to *know* God's Laws, we must learn to perceive the unvarying regularity with which Effects flow out of Causes throughout the whole range of material creation; from the particles of dust whence float in the sunbeam, to the Sun itself from whence that beam was darted.

In like manner, to *do* God's Will (in reference to our Social, Moral, and Religious duties) we must fully acquaint ourselves with the REVELATIONS of His will as recorded in the Bible, and echoed back to us from the Bible, by the self-same revelation in our souls: in other words, we must search the Scriptures by the light of the lamp of Reason which burns in our Souls continually,—lighted there for our guidance by the hand of God. What we find in the Bible of the uncontradictable and self-evident, is God's: and what we find in our souls of the uncontradictable and self-evident is also God's, *and both are Revelations.*

All Truth is a revelation from God. When the Natural Philosopher proves to us that MATTER is indestructible and eternal, the Truth thus derived is as *sacred* and as much *God's Truth* as this other,—this cognate or sister Truth, which we find in the Bible—viz., that the Soul is immortal and can never die. The proof of the one is the proof of both; for, if MATTER cannot be annihilated, so sure is it that SPIRIT, which must have been anterior to matter, and is superior to

it, and governs it, cannot be annihilated, but must exist for ever. And as thinking and knowing, suffering and enjoying belong essentially to the Spiritual Soul, so must the Soul exist, and think, and know, and suffer, and enjoy—FOR EVER.

These are the sources whence we know God's will in reference to our social, and religious duties, which, as we all remember, are summed up and comprehended in our Duty to God, and our Duty to our Neighbour: for "on these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. xxii. 40.) Indeed, on these two Commandments hang all the teachings of Jesus. Yes, He who taught us to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom taught us also what God's Kingdom *is*, by centering all his teaching on these two Commandments—as the mode and method of its realisation. They were the essence of his every *precept*: they were entwined and interwoven with every *action* of his sacred, and sacrificing life. Read all his Parables, and you will find that the precepts they convey mean *this*, and only *this*,—Ye shall love God with all your souls; and ye shall love your Neighbour as ye love yourselves; ye shall respect *his* feelings, rights, and privileges, as ye respect your own. Even when besought by the young man whose wealth was his only hindrance, that he would teach him *how that blessedness which the Gospel names "Eternal life"*—that *higher* blessedness of the life to come—might be attained to, Jesus had no other answer. His whole life (the life of Jesus) means only this,—BE MEN! LIVE RIGHTEOUS LIVES! FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT! TAKE UP YOUR CROSS; AND FOLLOW ME; AND WE SHALL REACH THE KINGDOM! The motto he left to be

inscribed in golden letters on the snow-white banner to be borne before the moral combatants of the cross, is ever this—**GOD IS LOVE! LOVE IS THE ONLY LAW!**

It is under this banner we pledge ourselves to fight—Jesus our leader, and God's Will our aim—when, meaning what we say—we say to God, our Father, **THY KINGDOM COME!**"

How shall I convey to you in a few brief words,—how in any words of mine—my sense of the general happiness of men in this coveted—this promised Kingdom of God on earth, when His will shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven? To describe that which *is not*, and *has not been*, is impossible. I must therefore leave your own imaginations to realise the idea of human Society and human institutions under the benignant reign of the Most High, when men shall own no other King than God; of that reign of Peace, and Love, and Righteousness of which Isaiah, inspired (though not miraculously inspired) by God, foretold that Jesus of Nazareth should be the great High Priest. I can only help you negatively to realise this thought. This we know must be.—There will be but one fold, a mighty circle the centre of which is Truth; and one Shepherd, a heaven instructed Guardian, the Teacher of this Truth. And as children of one common family, not only will "brethren dwell together in unity," but nations will be at concord; for when the God of all Goodness shall reign in the souls of men, and His *Will* be their Law, there will be no room for those Despots and their Minions, who are the disturbers of the world's peace; and whose existence in the world is the saddest comment, and whose characters,

and aims are the bitterest satire, on the sycophancy, and the selfishness, and the ignorance of mankind.

There will be no more bloodshed in the name of Religion; no *Moloch* in the Church; no *Mammon* on the Mart; no *Golden Calves* in the peopled wilderness; no mitred or unmitred *obstructors of Heaven's light*; no *Interpleaders* standing between God and Man; no *Toll-gates* on the high road to Heaven. "For thus saith the Lord God, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money." (Isaiah lii. 3.) "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and ye that have no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" (Isaiah lv. 1, 2.)

No my friends, our Commerce will be a commerce in Wisdom. There will be no "Panics" then; but in obedience to the natural Laws of the universe, Accumulation and Distribution will go hand in hand. There will be no useless superfluity in worldly doings, and no want. The squalid wretchedness which pains us now; the disease which taints the atmosphere; the abject servility which shocks all manly minds (seeing to what vile uses and mean straits our unchristian Laws and usages can reduce our fellow-men), shall be seen no more, when the Religion of Love shall have brought about God's Kingdom.

I think I see celestial beauty encircling and ennobling the forms and countenances of all humanity!—Glory on their foreheads, Heaven in their eyes, Wisdom on their lips, and the restless Spirit of Goodness, like the sweet and gentle

play of Moonbeams in a summer's night, intensifying, and illuminating, and beautifying all! There is AGE with its honors, without mental decrepitude! There is YOUTH with its joyousness, without rashness, intemperance, or conceit! There is WOMAN, morally and physically, the Angel of the Earth! There is MAN, her equal, her lover, her guardian, her friend!

I see Science, with its wonders, doing the bidding of its master, Man! I see ships on the Ocean which outlive the tempests! I see messages of amity, careering through the Nations, with the swiftness of thought! I see a family of Nations! I see Christian Civilization, I see the Kingdom of God!—the foretaste and precursor of that everlasting Kingdom—that infinite “Temple—not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!”

My dear friends, it is for this we are admonished to pray. It is for this that under the snow-white banner of the Cross, we pledge ourselves to fight against the countless impediments which obstruct the progress of pure religion, and stand as embattled barriers to the happiness-giving reign of righteousness, and the Will of God.

Let those then who are willing to renew this life-long pledge to fight the good fight for Humanity and for God, which our prayer implies, and which our Duty and our highest interests alike demand of us, say with me, Great God, our Father! Let thy Kingdom come! Amen.

WHAT IS MAN?

What is Man that thou art mindful of him?—PSALM viii. 4.

TO answer the question contained in this pious ejaculation of the Psalmist,—Lord, what is Man that Thou art mindful of him?—to answer this question truly—is to supply the solid foundation on which all *true* Religion must for ever rest.

At the first view, and to some minds, the question might seem to be *depreciatory* of man, and of human nature, and thus justify the gloomy notions which many pious people entertain of the subject of man's nature, and of Religion; and which the doctrines and dogmas of nearly every sect of all recognised religionists invariably and systematically teach. But this is certainly *not* the notion entertained by the royal Psalmist. His pious object is—not to depreciate and degrade Man, but, as the context clearly shows, to *exalt* him, as being an object of the affectionate care of God,—of that God who is the Author, from everlasting to everlasting, of all Power, of all Wisdom, of all Beauty, of all Goodness, of all Truth. He exclaims—"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the Earth! Who hast set thy glory above the Heavens! When I *consider* thy Heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou

hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him? And the Son of Man that thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet."

These noble sentences of the poet-king will live whilst language lasts! THE BIBLE, from which these grandly-pious sentences have been extracted, *is a book for all time*—and why? Because it contains (in some or other of its phases) *Truth* for man in every stage of his development; for men of all grades, degrees and conditions; for men in the dawn or baby-state of their intelligence; for their youthful state; for their state of manhood, and their prime. For the child, here is the marvellous; for the youth, the beautiful; for manhood, the grand and lofty; and for the most matured intelligence, the absolutely true.

The *Race*, like the individual man, has also its baby-hood; its adolescence; its vigorous manhood; and (like the Sun slowly ascending above the fogs and mists of morning) it has its highest altitude—its crowning prime.

There are always *individual* men whose piety and intelligence are thousands of years a-head of their time. Jesus, the Good; Socrates, the Wise; Plato, the Idealist. Sublime and pure were such men, and (we may remark in passing) had Plato been a practical teacher, like Socrates and Jesus—instead of a half-poetical, half-mystical theorist—he, too, would have paid the penalty of his pre-eminence by suffering a Martyr's doom. The Poet also,—I mean the *real* poet, he who utters in glowing and lofty language, the prophetic God-

taught promptings of his soul, is always many centuries in advance of his compatriots. In the rapt fervour of his minstrel syllablings he is a veritable Prophet, like Isaiah and Ezekiel: Great truths come to him he knows not whence, nor how; nor knows *he* half their import; they glow within him for a moment; he utters them in music, trumpet-tongued; and their echoes reverberate through the ages which shall interpret them—onward, onward, onward—for evermore. King David, the poet-psalmist, the sweet singer of Israel, was one of these.

Individuals preëminent for their piety and intelligence there always are; there always have been; but the great bulk of mankind advances slowly: it must take its natural time to grow; it puts forth its buds and leaves in Spring; it waits the Summer-time for its blossoming; and mellowing Autumn for its ripened fruit.

To the highly-gifted, Truth comes by inspiration. To the more mechanical and prosaic minds among us, Truth comes only (through the aids of Science) *by patient investigation and laborious toil*. Whatever progress may have been made by *individuals*—by the pioneers of the Race,—to whatever heights of moral and intellectual excellence *these* may have attained, our Race is but now emerging from its babyhood. It still delights in the marvellous and incredible; and is fond of sitting at its nurse's feet listening to tales of miracles and mysteries—to stories of blood and horror;—tales, albeit, culled from this Book of books; to all of which some truth-containing moral is appended with a view to keep our baby-world from the dangers which naturally beset it in its infantine condition of inexperience and want of higher culture.

It is, however, on the verge of adolescence. It is timidly venturing out of its Nurse's sight. It is beginning to perceive that there are beauty and loveliness in the world as well as mystery and horrors; and that the lovely and the beautiful are even *safer* guides to *Good*, and better guardians of our morals, than the marvellous, the ghastly and the grim.

That there are passages in this Book which favor a very gloomy view of Humanity, I mean not to deny: nor do I mean to deny or explain away what there is in these derogatory passages of absolute or partial *Truth*. Man *is*, and always *has been*, capable of the most abominable wickedness—the result of his animal passions and his ignorance: for what is the unreasoning baby, or the grown man, in his state of intellectual and moral baby-hood, but an *animal*, with the unformed impulses of the intellectual and moral Man struggling for a development? Until this baby (whether young or old) can reason, and know itself, and mount to a conception of its relationship to its God, and thence form some conception of the greatness of its destiny—it needs all the restraint which Truth wrapped up in mystery and terror can supply to curb the instincts of its animal nature: for, merely *as an animal*, a man can have no more idea of the religious and the moral than has the Elephant, the Donkey, or the Dog. Until there is Light, there must be Law; and the Bible—viewed even as a mere human book—supplies them both. Side by side, in this wonderful production, we find Mystery for the Child; Beauty for the adolescent; Grandeur for the athlete Man; and, in addition to these, the loftiest Truth for the religious Student and the Sage.

My dear friends, *our* path is onward. The post we occupy is somewhat in advance. We perceive that there is a bright and sunny, as well as a gloomy, side of Human Nature; that it has beauty as well as deformity; that God has indeed "made us a little lower than the Angels, and crowned us with glory and honour." Yet, still we say with the Psalmist, in pious ecstasy, "Lord, when I consider thy Heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained, what is Man that Thou art so mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" Feeling all this (as I trust we do), we can afford to look back with pitying complacency to the answer which the various sects of religionists around us still give to the momentous question. Let us review it,—not in triumph, not in pride, but in thankfulness that the answer is not ours: let us not even smile at the inconsistency that the professed and most orthodox believers in it habitually make profession of this, their belief, before the world, clothed—not in sack-cloth and ashes—but in vestments vying in whiteness and purity with the snowdrift on the mountain; or *in purple and scarlet richness* which is a sad, sad mockery of their professed worthlessness and *poverty of soul*! Let us forget their inconsistencies and believe them to be sincere. Quoting from the article "Man" in Brown's Dictionary of the Bible, and *culled* from the Book as though it were the pith and meaning of the *whole of it*, is the Reverend John Brown's descriptive character of Man—the noblest work *we* know, of an Almighty and Beneficent God:—"Every one (of us) is shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin. Every imagination of a man's heart is only evil from his youth, and that continually.

They are transgressors from the womb, and go astray, speaking lies: their heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; and their carnal mind at enmity against God. Out of their corrupt heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: they are filled with all unrighteousness, fornications, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity: they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, deceitful, proud, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers; without natural affections; implacable, unmerciful; they are lovers of themselves, boasters, blasphemers, unthankful, unholy, false-accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of everything good; traitors, heady, high-minded, foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. They are altogether corrupt and abominable, drinking up iniquity as the ox drinketh up water: with their tongues they use deceit; their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. By reason of this Sin, men are rendered miserable; the frame of this lower world is much altered; fields are blasted with the curse; the air infected with pestilential vapours; winds and seas are calculated to swallow up the guilty. Every man is *by nature* destitute of happy intent in, or fellowship with, God: they are under His wrath and curse: they are exposed to famine, war, pestilence, poverty, reproach, sickness, disappointments, toil, and to judicial blindness of mind, hardness of heart, vile affections, searedness and horror of conscience; a reprobate sense and slavery of Satan; and at the end to be in death driven away in their wickedness, and

to be in hell for ever tormented; punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power." This, my friends, is, in all its nakedness and deformity, *the universally recognised basis of all orthodox Theology.*

Leaving out of view the presumptuous passages which represent the Almighty Creator of all things to have placed the whole race of His intelligent creatures—the work of His will, under the awful ban of His "curse," and to have prepared everlasting tortures for all who do not (whether they have the opportunity or otherwise) seek reconciliation with Him in the one "only way" recognised in this "miserable sinner's" theology—what shall we say of this dismal catalogue of crimes? Does it represent the true character of the Human family? Is it the true answer to the Psalmist's question—What is man? I am unwilling to believe that, in these days, the most ignorant sin-and-hell-besotted Calvinist dare answer "Yes!"

With shame and sorrow I admit that there is too much truth in the picture which the Reverend John Brown has drawn with so much superfluous fulness, with such loving iteration and relish. I know that there is much deceit and wickedness in the world, much ingratitude, much hypocrisy, much ignorance, and much Atheism—which is the root and basis of it all. I know that Iscariot betrayed his Master,—*sold* him for a few silver pieces, and betrayed him with a kiss! I know that History teems with treachery. I know that *David* himself by the foulest treachery betrayed his brave subject and trusting and trusted general to destruction. I know that Brutus stabbed his friend, Imperial

Cæsar, in the Capitol; and I remember the eloquent words of the orator, Antony, descriptive of the scene, and denunciatory of the refined ingratitude of the act.

O, my friends, shocking is treachery;—despicable is ingratitude!—and *death* is *doubly death* when the hand that should have shielded strikes the blow! Yes! I know that villany, with brazen front, oft walks securely in the midst of us; that crime skulks prowlingly about, with dogged looks, in our towns and villages, and in all the highways and by-ways of the world: but I also know that Jesus lived a blessed, blameless life, and died a cruel death to teach us (these evils notwithstanding) that man's true nature is innately good; that the purifying Spirit of God dwells in him; that the child, instead of being sinful and accursed from its birth, is a type of the Kingdom of Heaven. I know that this dark picture of Humanity (though as true *now*, under the baneful influence of this dark teaching, *as it ever was*) is but *half* the truth, and therefore *essentially* a falsehood, as *half-truths* always are; and I know that, however necessary it may have seemed in the past and passing baby-hood of the world to put forth this worser half of the truth as the *whole* Truth, I believe that nothing can have a more enervating (not to say *pernicious*) effect on Religion and Morals *now*, than to continue to exhibit it without its nobler counterpart: for, after all, as I have already said, What is this unreasoning, untaught, full-grown, human baby but an animal with the unformed impulses of the intellectual and moral man struggling for a development? The great majority of the so-called civilised portion of mankind has ever, as far backward as history reaches, desired of all things—this the most

—to rid the world of all these evils. Men have ever loved the good, and hated the evil, and striven manfully against it, according to the light that has been from, experience or conviction, theirs. But what has been their instrument of reformation? LAW! And law is still *our* instrument eighteen centuries after Jesus lived and died to convince us that the *true* instrument is not Law, but Love! Law is itself an evil, and a falsehood,—I mean human Law—ever striving against a *higher Law* within us—a *Law of God*, which grows rebellious under harsh and ignorant restraint; but which only awaits development to robe itself in beauty, and make itself manifest in Love. Proceeding from the Soul, Love is the touchstone that finds out the Soul. It is the only conqueror! *So much, indeed, is Love*—the Love I am alluding to—the *natural product of the human mind*,—that, except in Scripture, and in scriptural discourses—the name we *always* give it is HUMANITY. This habit of looking ever on the unlovely side of Human nature is itself unlovely, and must be fatally pernicious to the character of all those who indulge in it. So did not Jesus.

Had Jesus based his religion on maledictory Law, as Moses did, or propagated a sensual religion at the point of the sword, like Mahommed; had he *not* been, on the contrary, a man in whom *Love*—that is, Humanity, largely predominated in all his words and actions, mankind (*evil-minded* as they are said to be) would not as they got enlightened have loved this Jesus more and more, nor have owned him for their guide and teacher in all good things for more than eighteen centuries with an ever-widening, still-increasing reverence and affection. The Religion of Moses is still

confined to a single people, exclusive and egotistic,—a people, scattered over the world and declining in numbers; and, though held together by the idea that they are the chosen of God, cannot, in their territorial homelessness, be accounted *a nation*, but a *name*. There is a mighty strength in the character of Moses to *venerate*; but we look in vain for the Goodness which it is in the very constitution of our nature to Esteem and Love. Look, again, at Mahommedism; which, for its much praying and ostentation of worship daily in the public mosques, promises to its votaries a merely sensual heaven in the world to come! It follows that a non-progressive sensualism is its peculiar and most cherished Institution here on earth. And what is the consequence? By the aid of this very sensualism its numbers are continually diminishing, and its very name is slowly dying out. Whilst, with the ever-progressing (though in many places *slowly* progressing) Institutions, and constantly-increasing Intelligence, of Christendom, the religion of Jesus, (little as it is understood) is for ever extending, and its members increasing with a steadiness which makes it certain that it will be ultimately embraced by every nation of the earth. And why? Because its principle is Goodness, Love, Humanity; and because Good and not Evil, Truth and not Error, eternal Beauty and not Deformity, are the natural objects of our solicitude; the things which, the more our intellect and affections are developed, the more we are compelled by the very constitution of our higher nature to yearn after, to venerate, and to love. How we honor the man who makes us acquainted with a new Truth! Locke, Newton, Harvey, Fulton, Watt. Their names are household-

words. It is true, we are sometimes dull of comprehension, and hard to be persuaded that a new Truth *is truth*; and we thence resist it, and persecute the divulger, even unto death; but this, with the mass of men, uncursed with wealth, is still but a further evidence (exemplified through our hatred of falsehood and imposture) of our natural love of Truth. Again. How we honor the man who opens our eyes to latent Beauty! who teaches us "to find tongues in trees; books in the running brooks; sermons in stones; and good in every thing!" How we venerate the Howards of our race; the doers of good; the benefactors of the world! So much are they a part of us, and we a part of them, that, though the grave has closed over their inanimate forms for centuries, their spirits dwell ever among us,—we will not let the memory of a good man die!

What, then, becomes of the notion that all men are naturally base, living in enmity to God, and instinctively opposed to all Goodness? It sinks, my beloved brethren, with the winking pictures and consecrated wafers, and wonder-working relics of dead saints, down, down, down, into the bottomless limbo of all pestilential quackery and absurdities!

Look, my friends, at the innumerable Books, and Pamphlets, and Sermons, and Lectures, and Newspapers, and Tracts, with which the gigantic steam-power Press of this nation, and of every European and Transatlantic nation, teems: and consider what would be thought of the author of any one of these numberless productions if his avowed, or even presumed, *object* were to propagate Evil, and not Good; Falsehood and not Truth; to maintain Wrong, and

ignore Right! Doubtless, there *is* much Wrong, much Falsehood, much Evil, put forth in these multifarious forms of human thought, designed for human teaching: but assuredly, this is the result of carelessness, and ignorance, and misdirected zeal; not of "malice prepense," and the premeditated malignity of mischievous intention: for, in every case, Christian fairness prompts us to believe that the Evil so put forth is thought by its propagator to be Good; the Wrong, to be Right; the Falsehood to be veritable Truth. No man dares, in a public appeal to his fellow-men, to vend and propagate Evil *as Evil*, Falsehood *as Falsehood*, and Wrong *as Wrong*: if he were to do so, and avow it, the natural love of Goodness, and Truth, and Right, that exists, vigorous and pure, in every one of us, would rise up in simultaneous judgment against that man; we should deem him either a madman or a monster—a wretch to pity and a character to scorn. There is no evidence of *inherent baseness here!*

Common fairness obliges us to believe that the Clergy of this and every other country would not, *could* not, maintain, and so zealously propagate the contrary opinion—the opinion that we are all *innately vile—reprobate by nature*—if they were not either profoundly ignorant of the first principles of Truth, or (what is the same thing) believers in the reign of a *Devil*, and *dis*believers in the existence of an all-powerful—an all-beneficent God! But, to proceed—no matter how unprincipled a man may be (and Atheism, and passion and avarice make millions so); no matter how great a knave a man may be (and strong is the temptation to knavery where every one "maketh haste to be rich"); no matter how ample

the evidence may be against him of his thorough worthlessness, as long as there is a plausible show of virtue on his side, he resents of all things the epithet which characterises him as *base*—as a traitor to Truth, and a renegade from Goodness and Virtue. As the unscrupulous Iago says:

“Who steals my *purse*, steals TRASH—
But he who filches from me my *good name*,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
Ana makes me POOR INDEED !”

There is a world of Philosophy in this immortal sentence; and not the less strikingly so that the poet, with all the quickness of a poet's intuition, has put it into the mouth of one of the most unscrupulous and heartless characters he ever drew. “A *good name* in man or woman”—he further tells us “is the immediate jewel of their souls.” It is so; for, he who is a bankrupt in this (if he be but sensible of his degradation) must seek the wilderness and dwell with brutes: he cannot live on equal terms with men. It is true, a good name has its *money-value* in the world, and is too frequently preserved and coveted for it: but in proof that, in his own estimation, a man is nothing without it,—let him, in his privacy, but seek communion with his God; or (which is much the same thing) let him hold a special session within himself, where he, himself, must judge himself; or, when he comes to die—and all shuffling is over—*then* what would he not give for that lost jewel of his soul—“a conscience void of offence before God” and man? Of this I am sure,—that, so good, and true, and righteous is the Law of his own nature—the Law *within himself*, that he will not find in all eternity a *harsher judge of his misdeeds* than he will find—

and find for ever—*there!* Observe how *just* is God! He who *thinks* he does not *Sin*, *does not*, and thence shall escape the judgment;—that is he shall not stand *self-condemned* by that inexorable judge within him, for doing a wrong which he did not *know* was wrong. Again, *Great* and certain is the *self-approving* REWARD of him who, tempted to do the wrong which he knows to be wrong, *uniformly resists that temptation*: whilst, on the other hand, he who, prompted by the monitor within him to do Right, and prefer Goodness, and adhere to the truthful and the pure, *resists these Angel promptings*, and, for the paltry bribe of a few temporal and fleeting advantages, disregards the law of his higher nature and the beautiful example of Jesus, our exemplar, and *knowingly persists in wrong*—as millions of us do—there is no power (and it is my duty to tell you so) that can absolve *him* from his guilt and the self-condemnation which must be his for evermore. But on these points it is not my purpose to dwell to-day. My object now is to convince you of the glorious fact (patent in the souls of every one of us) that, instead of being inherently false and base—haters of God and Good, we are inherently truthful and pure, lovers of God and Good—made by Him a little lower than the Angels; and that, in so far as we remain true to ourselves, He who has given us dominion over the works of His hands, and put all things under our feet, has, *indeed*, “crowned us with glory and honor.”

In prosecution of this object I would wish to make it clear to you here that the habitual wrong-doer, who knowingly persists in wrong, is ever obliged—if he would be successful—to palter with his own soul and impose on his fellow-men

by the easy but necessary expedient of naming his wrongdoing *Right*: for vice is ever compelled to present itself under the name, and in the garb, of virtue before it has any chance of acceptance, even among men whom the Mammon of all unrighteousness, and its attendant, Luxury, have so extensive¹ demoralised and corrupted. But amidst all,—enervated as it is by Luxury on the one hand, and debased by Wretchedness, Servility, Crime, and the hopelessness of half-required Toil, on the other, Human Nature is still the grand, progressive, immortal thing it was in the beginning when God said "Let us make man in our own image:" and it was so: and God saw that the work of His Sovereign Will was very good.

We have been accustomed to speak and write of *Brute nature* as *noble*. The Lion, the Horse, the Dog, we all admit are very noble creatures: and yet we are, on the authority of Religious Doctors, taught to declare our disbelief in the innate nobility—the Deity-derived Dignity—of Human Nature! If we were the authors of our own Nature we certainly ought to be modest. But Human Nature is not *our* work: It is God's work: and I know of no man, of this or any other time, who has a right to depreciate or abuse it. It is *wicked*—seeing *whom* we stigmatise. It is *foolish*—seeing what must be, and ever have been, the consequences.

It matters not that, in "high places," there are sneerers at the idea of the dignity of Human Nature. It matters not that a showy writer—a flowery one-sided Historian—like Thomas Babington Macaulay, should say, in praise of Lord Bacon, that "he indulged in no *rants* about the dignity of

human nature." The Psalmist differs with the Whig Historian. But, apart from this disagreement of two authorities, and *above* it, is the fact that Human Nature *is* what God made it, and will do the work which God has appointed it to do, notwithstanding the opinion of Thomas Babington Macaulay. Yet, that it may do this work, we must respect it both in ourselves and others: we must believe in it; honor it; and develope it to the utmost. The work of progress, and enlightenment, and human exaltation, must go on. We certainly are not so great—the greatest of us—as to set ourselves up for critics of God's work; and ought not to be so presumptuous—the vainest of us—as flippantly to denounce as evil that which He himself (according to Moses) declared to be "very good." We must cease, then, to stigmatise humanity. We must even, think better of its habitual detractors than (if honest) they think of themselves. We may think as meanly as we please of ourselves for our habitual neglect and ignorance of the advantages we possess of growing day by day *better and greater beings than we are*, for, this moral, religious, and intellectual advancement has been left to ourselves, and for this ignorance and neglect we alone are responsible. We have reason enough for being modest here: but, unless we intend to turn *Atheistical Necessitarians* quite; unless we intend to deny our responsibility and as foolishly as impotently to arraign our Maker, let us think and speak reverently of our Nature; and study its laws; and grow wiser and better by their habitual observance.

These Laws are darkly and grandly shadowed forth in the Bible; and in many other good books: but they are legibly

written (if I may employ so mean a metaphor in reference to so great a Being)—they are legibly written by God's own fingers—on our Souls. The meanest child whom you are blessing with instruction in your Sunday School—the simplest-minded Husbandman who tills the fields to bless us with his labors—the Tradesman who vends his wares in our shops and warehouses—the Customers who buy, and the Thief who steals them—the Squire who lives luxuriously in the Hall that beautifies the landscape yonder, and calls the broad lands all around him “mine”—the gifted men and women who write our books—the Poet who teaches us to feel that God, and good, and truth, and beauty, exist in everything—the Preacher whom we too often make our oracle in Scripture-lore, our proxy in Religion, our guide and teacher in the sacred things we ought to be as learned in as he—the Philosopher whose noble avocation it is to discover the hidden Law that lives and moves in all things,—from the tiniest insect endued with life and feeling, and the lowliest mosses that we tread upon,—up to the Sun and Moon and Stars which stud the thick-sown heavens, and bless us with their light, and awe us with their magnitudes, and charm us with their strange mysterious beauty—Yes! The *Philosopher, Preacher, Poet, Squire, Trader, Husbandman*, and *Child*—of each, and all, has God alike been “mindful.” He has written, and that legibly, His Law—*without distinction*—in the Souls of all of us; and has thereby “made us a little lower than the Angels, and crowned us with glory and with honor.” These words will, of necessity, sound strange to some of you. When we take up a book to study it, what do we do? We read a sentence, or a

paragraph, or a page; and then we stop and ask ourselves, Can this be true? And to *us* the statement made, never *is* true until our souls have answered from within us—"Yes: it is *possible*, and therefore, *may be true*: it is *probable*, and is therefore, *very likely to be true*: it is *self-evident*, and therefore, *must be true*." No matter how new and strange the revelation *is* that the Book has made to us; we never adopt it as a verity—we cannot make it our own, until we have dived into the depths of our own Consciousness for the confirmation of its truth. The Book is only the Monitor: the confirmation of its facts is registered within. And this divine apparatus is as much the untaught Ploughman's—who is always using it about simple matters—as it is the Philosopher's—who uses it in reference to the highest.

My dear friends, If you have confidence in me, it would be easy for me to abuse that confidence, and lead you (though unwillingly) astray. Then do not trust me! Test me as you would test an enemy. Scrutinize my words as you would scrutinize a known deceiver. Hear: but *judge*. I tell you, then, there is nothing true, nothing holy, nothing good, in any book, but the germ of that goodness and holiness, and the only reliable test of that Truth, already exists (awaiting only the developement) within the yet unfathomed depths of your truth and goodness-loving Minds. You doubt this. Why do you doubt? You love Truth; hate Falsehood; and would not be deceived. So far this is proof that your natural sympathies are not with Satan of lying notoriety; but with God and Truth. You have doubted, therefore, because you love Truth. What next do you do? Flout my words, and cast them aside



without a thought? No!—for that would be to act like priest-made Bigots, not like God-made men. You doubt, but you take my words into your inmost minds, and weigh them there; and *this*, for no other reason than that the touchstone of all human truth is there. You may ask a friend, you may ask your Bible, *if this or that be true*: but you can never *know* it to be true until you have found the *key* to it—the truth which corresponds with it—in *your own minds*. You may believe to *order*: you may learn to think, and do, and say, *as you are bidden*; but, remember, thus are *Parrots* taught, and *Dogs* and *Bears*, and *Apes*—not *MEN*.

Think of this, dear friends: pore over it at your work; or when you “chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancies” in your solitary leisure. Talk of it among your friends: satisfy yourselves of its truth, and you will never again believe (if you ever *have* believed) that your nature is “altogether corrupt and abominable,” that you are “Haters of God,” and “lovers of all evil things.” No! Satisfy yourselves of the *contrary* of this libel on your nature, and you will never think meanly of that nature any more. “*Prove* all things, and hold fast to that which is good.” *Here* is the beginning—not of Pride, as some will tell you, but of modest self-respect: here is the birthplace of the highest Morality: here is the cradle of the purest Religion: here is the commencement of your real intercourse with God: here is the advent, the first safe step to the highest and holiest knowledge.

Prove all things! and

All Books—and most, perhaps, the Bible—

All Men—and *most*, perhaps, the *Poet* and the *Preacher*.

ALL NATURE—and *most of all* that part of it which you have *studied most*—will conspire to help you *then!* But, *until then*, Books will be unintelligible; Man will be an unreadable enigma; and Nature, beautiful Nature, wonderful, mysterious, truth-affording Nature, a dumb unanswering blank!

Prove all things!—

And you will be convinced, as I am, that the Revelation *within us* is anterior to the Revelation which the progress of Science unfolds; anterior also to the Revelation vouchsafed to us for our edification and guidance in this Book of Books; and not anterior *only*, but *superior to either*, inasmuch as it is *the elucidator and interpreter of both*.

Prove all things!—

And you will be convinced, as I am, that man's nature is eminently truth-loving, and "very good"—whatever may thence become of the "scheme" of the Atonement.

Prove all things!—

And you will have the true answer to the question of the Psalmist, "Lord, what is Man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

Prove all things!—

And you will comprehend that God has, indeed, made us, in our nature a "little lower than the Angels," and has thus "crowned us with glory and honor."

Yes, my brethren and sisters, let us obey the Apostle's injunction—

"Prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good!"

And thenceforward the Universe becomes our Temple,—the stars, the clouds, the mighty sea, the rivers, the waving

woods, the growing corn, the tuneful birds, the blooming gardens, the grass, the flowers—*all are our monitors and friends*: we are never alone: we are everywhere with God: our Religion is a reality: we are a Law to ourselves: we are a light to them that sit in darkness; and shall every day grow worthier the high privilege of accounting ourselves *Men*; and Jesus our Elder Brother; and God (the Creator and Preserver of all things) our indulgent Father—our evermindful, neverfailing Friend to whom be all praise, and glory, and honor, for ever! and for ever! Amen.

THE "ONE THING" DESIRED BY THE PSALMIST.

"One thing have I desired of the Lord ; that will I seek after.—That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His temple."—PSALM xxvii. 4.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Before entering upon the principal topic suggested by this passage from the Royal Psalmist, there are one, two, or three circumstances which claim our consideration.

Jesus of Nazareth is called THE SON OF DAVID. Why? Because if the table of his genealogy given by the Evangelist Matthew in the first chapter of his gospel is to be relied on, Jesus was the son of *Joseph* (who was the *husband* of Mary of whom Jesus was born), and Joseph traced his descent in direct line from Solomon (born of her that had been the wife of Urias), who was the son of David, King of Israel. Now, if Jesus was by lineal descent the son of David (and there seems to be no reason to doubt the genealogy) he was the son of Joseph; hence JOSEPH WAS HIS FATHER—and there was no miracle in the matter.

That his birth was attributed by his contemporaries to a miraculous interposition of God, is a proof of the holiness of his life, and of the extraordinary greatness and goodness of

his character. The world, long abused by an erroneous notion, is only just beginning to feel how great and good that character *is*; and in what consists the difference which renders it extraordinary when compared with the characters of all other men of whom History has preserved a record. Some men are great POETS—Shakespeare was one of these; some are great PHILOSOPHERS—Socrates and Plato may be mentioned as types; some are great WARRIORS—Alexander was one; some are great LEGISLATORS—such was Moses; some are great PATRIOTS—our own Hampden was a bright example. Some men are great in ART, and some in ARMS, and some in SCIENCE, and some in POLITICS, and some in LEARNING, and some in knowledge and interpretation of HUMAN LAW. David was greatly PIOUS; Solomon was greatly WISE. Put all these together, face them all in one, and they will not make a JESUS OF NAZARETH—the PERFECTLY GOOD MAN.

Jesus was the embodiment of that greatness to which all other greatness (when the world shall have learned how to profit by his example) must thenceforward forever, *tend*. He was the embodiment of that Principle which has for its aim and end, the elevation and happiness—present and prospective—of all humanity. He saw that WISDOM and PIETY, and LAW, and LEARNING, and POLITICS, and SCIENCES, and PHILOSOPHY, and ARTS, and ARMS, are but as “sounding brass and tinkling cymbals,”—or something vainer and more valueless,—IF NOT DIRECTED TO THIS HOLY END:—hence his Religion—which bids us live for God and Humanity—that *Religion* which rejects none of these forms of greatness (save that of Arms), but accepts them

all, and would *employ* them all, as *means*, not *ends*,—as *instruments and helps*—to that upward progress in the perfectibility of the human spirit which is blessedness—is its Heaven.

There is then a great difference between the character of David and that of Jesus. David was *pious* in a high degree; but PIETY is not RELIGION; nor when Self is the sole object does it constitute the half. With Piety equal to David's Jesus (without aptitude of selfishness) possessed a LOVE large as the ever widening circle of Humanity,—a SYMPATHY that embraced the World.

Read the Psalms, and you will see, (grandly pious, though they are) that the blessings *sought* are, for the most part, *personal*; read the Gospels, and you will see that SELF *is lost sight of in the service of Humanity*—that JESUS labored, and thought and prayed and suffered,—FOR MANKIND. David calls down imprecations on the heads of his enemies: JESUS *forgives* them—even in his agony on the Cross—forgives them and tries to do them good. DAVID is the personification of human *Law*: JESUS, of Divine exhaustless LOVE. DAVID is a *ruler*; JESUS, a *teacher* of men. David can become a teacher only when men possess (what JESUS supplies us with) that *test* of all moral and religious Truth which shews us, that whatever is good and desirable for one man, is good and desirable for all; and which at the same time teaches us how to distinguish between the evil and the good. For *this* knowledge we search in vain in the Psalms, in the Prophets, in the writers of the Old Testament, and in the writers of the New, until we have found in the words of Jesus, *that Light*—the counterpart

and reflex of a *Light within us*—by which alone the Religion contained in the Bible is discoverable by man.—By the aid of this Light let us examine the passage from the pious Psalmist which forms the starting-point of the present discourse.

“One thing have I desired of the Lord and that will I seek after;—That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in His Temple.”

It will be remembered that in my discourse on the Lord's Prayer I attempted to prove to you that the “One thing” we are instructed in that formulary “to desire” of God, and day by day to “seek after,” is that reign of Peace and Love and Righteousness on Earth which Jesus therein denominates, GOD'S KINGDOM,—a desire, which comprehends everything desirable, whether for individual men, or the race. I endeavoured to convince you and I hope successfully, that a “desire” in the form of a solemn prayer to God, *is in effect*, and ought to be so considered *in fact*, a solemn pledge on our part to do what in us lies for its accomplishment. This is exactly the Psalmist's view, for when “he desires” “That he may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and enquire in His Temple,” he distinctly and emphatically says “*that will I seek after* :”—not, as you will perceive, after having put his prayer in the form of a desire,—that he will indolently wait for God to work a miracle in his behalf, and thus execute it for him; but that he himself “will seek after it,”—that he will make the realization of this exalted and holy desire

the chief subject of his contemplations, and the business of his life.

A brief comparison of the desire of DAVID, and the desire of JESUS, will shew wherein they *differ*, and wherein they *agree*. The chief *difference* consists in this,—DAVID's prayer is *personal* and *exclusive*; whilst the prayer of JESUS (exemplifying the principle—That whatsoever is morally and religiously good and desirable for any *one man*, is good and desirable *for all*) asks the same state of blessedness for all humanity. The blessing sought by both is substantially the same; it is the same *idea* differently expressed. DAVID desires to dwell (of course spiritually) in that proximate communion with God which is implied by the idea of dwelling in the same house with Him; whilst Jesus desires that God will deign to dwell in the souls of men, and visibly establish on earth His heavenly Kingdom; David, that *he*—Jesus, that *all men*—might comprehend the "beauty" of His beneficence by the diligent study of His works and Laws in the magnificent Temple of the Universe, where the way side weed, or the microscopic mechanism of an insect's wing, is as eloquent an evidence of His Power and goodness, as are the Tides and the Seasons, and ceaseless revolution of innumerable worlds through space.

Jesus and the Psalmist agree also in this—That we should limit our desires to that one blessing in which every other is necessarily comprehended,—the desire for the coming of God's Kingdom as Jesus phrases it;—the desire "to dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of our lives, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His Temple," as

it is more poetically but less distinctly put by the Psalmist: it follows therefore that to work out the object of this desire, is the aim and substance of all religion. Hence the Preacher's topic is necessarily a monotonous one,—Duty —Duty,—Duty,—to-day, and to-morrow, and for ever Duty!

But, my dear friends, although the Preacher's topic is monotonous, the *scope* of his teachings, had he the ability to grasp it, is as boundless as Creation; and the beauty and variety of the illustrations involved therein, comprehending as they do all the Phases, Laws and Circumstances *incidental to Matter and Mind*,—ARE INFINITE: for it is no mere meaningless metaphor—this of the Poet—that the well informed and truly meditative mind is able to discover

“Books in the running Brooks,
Sermons in Stones, and good in everything.”

Knowledge, governed by one fundamental principle of moral Truth, converts everything into *beauty*; and beauty, rightly understood, conducts our beauty-loving minds through the beautiful in thought and action, to the source and fountain of *all Beauty*—which is God!

THEOLOGIANs might emerge by thousands from the contemplation of crabbed salvation-schemes, as concocted by power-loving Bigots, and taught in Colleges and Halls;—but the true Teacher must matriculate under Jesus of Nazareth in the world of Humanity; and have beheld “the beauty of the Lord” in His manifold works; and enquired after the truth of things in His boundless “Temple.” It is not enough that he *believe* in God,—he must *know* Him. It

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is not enough that he has *partially* beheld His beauty in His manifold works!—he must have perceived that the divinest part of Beauty is Beneficence—is Goodness. *That* GOODNESS, of which David had not conceived, Jesus was the first to teach;—which Christendom is slow to learn;—*that* "*Beauty of the Lord*" which is Equity and Justice—to be the rule of men on earth, as it is in the Kingdom of our Father in Heaven.

Such is my idea of the true Preacher. He is Science, and Art, and Religion, and Morality, and Politics, *all in one*; Science the teacher; Art the beautifier; Religion the sanctifier; Morality the humanizer; Politics the Socializer, all blended, and comingled into unity; for the SACRED and the SECULAR are one. He shall make manifest the "beauty of the Lord" as it is seen in the Cloud, and in the *Sunshine*; in the *Dew*, and in the *Rain*; in the *Grass*, and in the *Grain*; in the flowers; in the *Succession* of the *Seasons*, and in the *Alternation* of Day and Night; in the *Ebbing* and *Flowing* of Tides; in the *Diversity* of *Landscape*; in the *Forms* and *Hues* of things, of which the Poet and the Artist strive to seize the expression; in the *Means* and *Ends* which Science recognizes; in the *Vast* and the *Minute*; in the *Stellar wonders of the midnight sky*; in the *Law*,—encircling, controlling, and Deifying all! And the time shall come when, day by day, the "Sons of God shall present themselves before the Lord,"—AND SATAN SHALL NOT BE AMONGST THEM.

My dear friends, the one great want in the world's religion is A GOD! There are heaps of Idols, multitudes of mock Divinities; thousands of Temples in which superstitious

ceremonies are "performed"—that is to say *enacted* in *His Name*. We have the name, my friends, but not the *Reality*. MAMMON, that is—the personified idea of GAIN, is a Reality among us; GOD IS A MYTH. If Religion had a God—as Commerce has—the world would teem with GOODNESS as it now teems with GOLD, and Merchandise, and other Tangibilities about which all men are in earnest; and none more so than those whose Religion consists in Symbols and whose God is a Material thing—of such are most of those who *profess* to be Christians. Touch a Church rate; withhold your Tithe, and according to their own confession, their God totters from its pedestal; their Religion vanishes, Chaos is come again! Truly educate the people; instruct the uninstructed, bid *them* behold "the beauty of the *Lord*," and "enquire in His Temple;"—No! The God of the Universe is not their God! Teach the multitude to "enquire,"—they tremble,—and well they may—for the world's "Religion!"

Ask common justice for men at the hands of their fellow-men: No! Their God knows nothing of common justice; it is not so much as named in the Articles of their Religion!

We call the simple Savage of the South Sea Islands, because he carries with him some rude symbol of some vague idea which has arisen in his mind (as it arises in all minds) of an unseen Divinity, his soul is prone to worship; which symbol, because he can see, and touch, and handle it, helps his slender faith, and cherishes his ever-faltering hope; and is to him as a God—in the battle with his enemies, and in all the dangers and hardships of

his joyous life—we call this simple savage an *Idolater*,—meaning thereby, a poor degraded, benighted creature when compared (as we are in the habit of comparing him) with our “civilised” God-serving *selves!* But how stands the account if our Religion should desert us, and the God of our Religion be dethroned, should Parliament abolish Tithes; or give the children of the Poor an education equal to their richer brethren; or give back to the People the LAND (now *owned* by those who are the chief supporters of *this* Religion) which is *their* BIRTH RIGHT?—Deprive the Savage of his Idol, of the symbol of his Divinity, which has been his supposed guardian in a hundred perils,—the talisman of his faith is gone! He had not the reality of a God: he had never beheld “the beauty of the Lord,” nor “enquired in His Temple”: his dim idea of the unseen Divinity is dissipated; and he stands—conscious of his helplessness—a human being without a God!

I will not ask you to answer the question—but suppose the Bible and all recollection of it were lost to Christendom, where would be our Religion? And yet there is the same God, whose “Goodness is over all;” whose guardianship of His creatures does not depend upon an accident; whose boundless Beneficence is His beauty; and whose universal Temple courts our enquiries still!

If, my dear friends, there be this parallelism between an untaught savage and ourselves, it shows that *faith in a Beneficent God, in both of us*, is but a *modicum*; or that the God we believe in is the God of the Old Testament, and not of the New,—fierce, changeful, partial, and devoid of beauty. It is plain this old idea clings to us; or if not to

us, at least to the old Christian System ; or our belief in God's protection would not be so easily extinguished, or Christianity so barren of beneficent results.

You will ask me in what consists its barrenness? You will tell me—"We have Churches and Chapels enough, and we support them. We provide the infirm and aged with a home. We support hospitals for the sick. We pay our workpeople the highest wages we can afford. We teach many children in our Sunday schools. We endeavour to reform the intemperate, and the dissolute, and the vicious, and to reclaim the lost. We tolerate all religious persuasions. We pay our quota towards the punishment or reformation of criminals, and the expense of the State. We give away Pounds in the year in charity. We wipe away many tears, in secret, which trickle down Misery's wan cheek ; and often shed a tear ourselves when (richer in heart than in purse) Prudence forbids a larger sacrifice in justice to those who have prior and dearer claims." I know it my dear friends ; and I know that the Divine blessing accompanies the doers of such deeds, when they are the result of genuine sympathy, whether prompted by the soul of goodness within us, or by the Gospel of Christ.—But, all these alleviating circumstances notwithstanding,—when I look around the world and see the misery it contains—abject crowds crouching to imperious tyranny—humanity still bought and sold, like cattle in the market-place—whole nations held in civil servitude by the Sword of Power—hundreds of millions of men and women steeped in ignorance and superstition to the very lips—civilisation reduced to a more convenient and

systematic mode of slavery—Churches in league with Despots—frail women starving on the poor pittance obtainable from incessant toil—Mendicancy a vocation—Thievery a trade—The "great social evil" a thing of spontaneous growth—Religion standing aloof—Philanthropy bewildered—Wealth and Luxury telling us that these evils are no concern of theirs; that they are the result of inevitable circumstances, and part of the inscrutable designs of Heaven;—when I see these things, and know that the remedy is to be found in the few and simple precepts of the Gospel, and in the knowledge that these precepts are in harmony with the best instincts of our nature, and the evident will of God, I am constrained in sorrow and humiliation to ask you whether, whilst Mammon is a reality among us, the Bible be not an Idol, Christianity a *make-believe*, and God a *Myth*?

What notions of God (if they believe in one) the Dignitaries of our Churches, and the Rulers of Kingdoms entertain, I know not; but if by systematic degradation, millions in all communities are thus to be placed out of the pale of humanity by their instrumentality and connivance, in defiance of the divinest instincts of our nature, the evident designs of Providence, and the teachings of Christ, all I will say is—they are not Christian notions, however much their evil consequences may call into activity those virtues in a few among us, which do homage to the faith we profess.

With a tenderness that would have been pathetic had the sentiment been applied to mankind at large instead of to the

utterer, David exclaims, in the Psalm from which our text is taken—"I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Seeing the huge mass of Evils which environ us on every side and believing them (as many do) to be the natural result of some original depravity in human nature, and *not* the results of circumstances removable by ourselves,—the general belief is, that whatever destruction Time might in the flight of ages, bring upon all mutable things, *two* of the institutions of Christendom will escape unscathed—and will continue to be "toasted" at all the social gatherings of the people, as they *now* are "toasted"—even to "the crack of doom." I mean the *conquering* "ARMY," and the *unconquering* "Church." These it is believed will *survive in their pristine vigor—whatever else may fail.*

Disagreeing with this opinion, by believing in moral and intellectual progression—having faith in Truth—assured that human nature is not inherently depraved, but on the contrary, that it is naturally good, and that nineteen twentieths of the evils from which we suffer are our own making, and removable if we choose to remove them (and this is certainly the Gospel view), I claim for my fellow creatures that the "sure and certain remedy" which Jesus prescribes—the substitution of Love for Law in our dealings with each other—might be applied to our Social and Moral malady before we despair of a cure.

"I had fainted" said the Psalmist, "unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living:"—and the same sentiment—the wish, if not the hope, exists in

every human bosom, no matter whether the cuticle that covers it be white or black. The WISH is *inherent*; the HOPE is a *growth*, and comes of our assurances in the Gospel, but chiefly of our questionings in the Temple where eternal Beauty—which is Goodness—awaits the glad eyes of all pious and earnest Seekers for evermore.

Now (apart altogether from the assurances of the Gospel) it is not possible to conceive (so however it appears to me) that anything *men can do* can be so pleasing and acceptable to a Beneficent God, as that His intelligent creatures should make His attributes of Benevolence the Law of their lives; that they should dwell together in the daily and hourly interchange of those Christian graces—Sympathy, Generosity, Forbearance, Love: substituting Reason for the Sword; Arbitration for Law; Temperance for the Physician; Knowledge for Faith; and the Reality of Religion, for its barren and empty NAME.

We all know the magical effects of Kindness; the magnetic effects of Love. We know that the doing of an act of Kindness more than repays the cost of it, though it meet with a base return.

On the other hand,—we know, that Hatred begets Hatred; Opposition, Resistance; and that Despots carry a demon in their bosoms which destroys their peace. We know that Freedom is one of our most cherished possessions; and that even the needful restraints of human Law are more or less obnoxious to us all. All these things we *know*; they require no demonstration to prove them, no argument to convince us of their truth. Let us then put them in *practice*;—let us

teach them to our CHILDREN;—and the beginning to an universal reign of Righteousness will have been made without the help of the Bigots, and the *end* we thus strive after will as surely come.

We will now trace the development of natural Goodness one step further;—(*and it is the last.*)

We know,—or if we do not, we ought to know—that these preferences and dislikes of ours are not *arbitrary* and *conventional*, but that they are as much an inherent portion of our Nature, as are Sensation, and Perception, and Thought,—We know,—or if we do not, we ought to know—that to have the things for which we have an *Antipathy* foisted on, or forced upon us, is universally the forerunner of Discord, and Hatred, and Strife: and that to have the things which are *agreeable* to our nature and feelings, *conceded* to us (and this perhaps at a sacrifice) *by our fellow men* is the beginning of *kindness*; the motive to Friendship, and a *challenge* (which no generous mind refuses) to a rivalry in Goodness—to a contest (in which both sides are winners)—a contest of Magnanimity, Generosity, and Love.

Thus you see, my dear Friends, that Goodness is as natural to us, as eating or sleeping; and that Christianity is not a forced production of nature, like Cucumbers in a hot house; but like the Hawthorn that blooms in our hedgerows—though transplanted from Heaven—is *a flower of NATURAL GROWTH*.

It is only turning the *best*, that is the Intellectual, the Moral, and the Spiritual sides of ourselves *towards* each other, and turning away the animal side (which is naturally

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a selfish one)—and the huge pile of evils, which disgrace us melts away like the snow upon the Mountains;—the Demon of ugliness, like the mists in the valley, vanishes,—the "Beauty of the Lord" shines above and around us,—the prophecy of Isaiah is at length accomplished,—the Prayer of Jesus is abundantly answered,—the Kingdom of our Father is come!

PURE RELIGION.

"Pure Religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep yourself unspotted from the world."—JAMES i. 27.

IT is through the Evangelists and the Apostles that we receive the Religion of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ himself wrote nothing. Each of the Evangelists relates the history, and acquaints us with the doings, and sayings, and sufferings of our great Teacher.

In some particulars these Gospellers and Historians of Jesus disagree with each other; and being only men, it was natural that they should. No two men relate the same story in the same words, or in the same order, or themselves receive the same impressions from, or attach the same importance to, the facts and circumstances they record. Sameness might imply concert: and concert would suggest the idea of fraud. Agreement in essentials therefore, with a difference in rendering them, according to the difference in temperament and genius of the individual narrators, is an evidence of the good faith, and general reliableness of each, and *not* an evidence to the contrary.

And this, in most of the historical and didactic essentials

recorded by the four Evangelists concerning Jesus of Nazareth and his teachings, is sufficiently obvious to place *their* records above all suspicion of collusion or fraud.

Where they differ in their estimation or interpretation of the doctrines they record, we are clearly at liberty, each one for himself, to decide between them.

This liberty comes with the possession of the book, translated into our own vernacular or mother tongue, in which these four versions of what is essentially the same Gospel, are transcribed and preserved.

The right of private judgment is the palladium of Protestantism, and is moreover in accordance with the spirit of our free institutions, and of the tendency of the times in which we have the happiness to live.

To give an example of this difference, Jesus called himself the Son of God, and spoke occasionally of the Holy Spirit; and the Evangelist John being more metaphysical and imaginative than the other Evangelists, allowed his mind to dwell upon these metaphorical expressions of Jesus, until he considered, or until he wrote what led others to conceive the idea of a Trinity—a Godhead composed of three persons: whilst the Evangelist Matthew attached more importance, and thence gave more prominence, to the practical teaching contained in the Sermon on the Mount. Consequently, judging for ourselves, believing in the *unity* of God, and in the human personality, but divine mission of Jesus, we, like Matthew, think more of the practical teachings of the Nazarene than John appears to have thought, whilst we think the latter in error in allowing his imagination to convert metaphor into matter-of-fact.

There is a similar difference between the Apostles, who were the earliest preachers and disseminators of the Gospel among the various civilised nations of their day.

Paul was a great stickler for *Faith*. James for *Good works*. For myself, the more I study the subject, the more I am satisfied the Apostle James is right, and his epistle a faithful interpretation of the religion of Jesus, in so far as it declares—as it does in the chapter from which our text is taken—that “If any be a *hearer* of the word, and not a *doer*, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful *hearer*, but a *doer* of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”—And then he tells us what, in his view of the matter, this perfect law of liberty is.”—

“Pure Religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father is this,—To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world;”—For assuredly, whether these things be done *through faith* or altogether *without faith*, the doer will taste of the blessedness of heaven—that is, he will “be blessed in his deed.”

Religion, my dear friends, is a very simple thing: there is nothing more natural to us: nothing more easy: nothing more delightful. It is an honest and simple mode of reverencing God, by acts of duty and loving kindness to our fellow-creatures. It consists in following out the law—the Law of Love—which God has written in our consciences.

Humanity is *naturally* humane. But Society is arti-

ficial, and hence arise nine-tenths of our temptations to go astray,—and *all* our difficulties, and *all* our *moral miseries!*

An artificial mode of life, has led to an artificial method of Religion. Disguise it as we will, it is the selfish hankering after the possession of *things we cannot possess*, that makes Religion seem to us a thing so difficult and unattainable.

Our *Nature*, together with the virtues or, the vices we engraft upon it,—these only are our *own*. “God and the Father” gave us our nature, with all its inherent longings for the true, the good and the beautiful,—and left the culture thereof to us.

This garden and the produce thereof, whether the produce consists of weeds, or flowers—these are our own: in time and throughout eternity these are ours.

Here is a Garden of Eden given us to till: here grows “every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of Life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of Knowledge of good and evil.”

And here is the River, the broad and beautiful river of thought which fertilizes the garden.

And here, when we will, we might wander, and (so long as we were sinless) we might listen to the voice of our God, walking in this our Eden in the cool of the day.

This nature of ours, which Moses typified under the apt and pleasing similitude of a Garden—this *Nature* is our own: but the broad acres, and the shining ingots grubbed up from the mines—the cravings after which, gives us new aims, artificial desires, and a false religion—these are not

ours, and in what we do for a brief possession of them, how rarely are we "blessed in our deed!"

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, *is from within*. It is not a thing to be determined by outward circumstances—a thing of calculation—"this will I do, because *that* I shall gain thereby." *It is of the soul*, from which it springs spontaneously, like water gushing from its fountain source among the rocks. It is the spirit of God, the pure likeness of the Father—*within us*; expanding itself on every side; glorifying everything by its own silvery light; tinting every object in nature with its own bright hues; robing the universe and all that therein is, with beauty; and seeking to make that universe its own; by assimilation, and knowledge, and love, and all-embracing sympathy.

Happy is the man, the woman, the youth, the maiden, who, sad and sickening of the world of sense, (whose idols are Lucre and Respectability) says "I will arise and go to my Father;" in this outward world I am a stranger: in my inward world *is God*—my strength, my being, my hope, my happiness, my salvation!"—

Here, my dear friends, is Freedom; "the perfect Law of Liberty"—that universal sympathy, that *Love* which is a law unto itself. All other Law is restrained; but this alone is "perfect liberty."

Herein we soar where Faith with flagging wings could never bear us: we are already within the precincts of the "life eternal;" we are in the presence of *Him* who is the source and fountain of all life. Thus every man lives in his own Heaven, if he have a heaven; and for this reason he cannot

live in another's. Another might help him to fashion it, or he might fashion it himself; but ere he inhabits it, it must be his own: Others might have planted it, or have given the seed; but he must have himself tended it, and pruned it, and trimmed it, and watered it, or—it shall not blossom, but be fruitless—fruitless at least to *Him*.

I have thus, briefly, my dear friends endeavoured to sketch to you the idea I conceive the Apostle James entertained of Pure Religion.

He had a great, and for the times, and under the circumstances in which he lived and wrote, a high and just appreciation of God, without which every man's religion—I do not mean his *practice*, but his *ideal* of religion must be imperfect.

His *practice*, from the progressive character of his soul, and from the temptations to which, as a man, he must be subject, is necessarily imperfect; but, if a man has, humanly speaking, a JUST IDEA of God, his ideal of religion will be *just*, in the same proportion.

It appears to me therefore, that this Apostle did not gaze up at the stars; and look round on the wonders and beauties of external creation, *to find God*, so much as into *himself*—into the depths—the depths which no man has yet fathomed—*of his own consciousness*; into the infinite longings and the infinite suggestions of his own soul. In these privileged communings with you, my friends, on this sublime subject of Religion, I am only like each of you, a mere learner; (and the most learned doctor is no more) and therefore I am not ashamed to confess that, to my mind there are ideas attributed by the Evangelists even to Jesus himself, which



are not so just concerning the character and attributes of God, as some of those which were communicated by his Apostles.

One of the earliest doubts I ever dared to entertain of the correctness of the Jewish idea of God, was in consequence of that oft-repeated expression in the account by Moses of God's dealing with Pharaoh—I allude to the expression “and God hardened Pharaoh's heart,” and then sent plagues upon his people, the Egyptians, for a fault which was not theirs, nor, as I then thought, Pharaoh's either. I never overcame this doubt.

A similar doubt, a similar dislike, have I always entertained of that passage in the prayer (as rendered by the Evangelists) which we call in honor of Jesus—the Lord's prayer—“Lead us not into temptation.” I doubt if this were Christ's expression.

In the chapter from which our text is taken, the Apostle corrects this idea. He felt that without temptation—without a liability to sin (as the result of this temptation) we must have been created Brutes or Angels.

He felt that Sin is at once our glory and our shame—our glory when we subdue and conquer it; and our shame when we suffer it to conquer us: hence he saw that we are tempted by the lusts of our lower nature, and *that*—wisely, beneficently, and necessarily: and therefore he tells us at the 4th and following verses of the 1st chapter of his Epistle—“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is *tried*, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.” And then he warns us against the notion that God tempteth any man.—“Let no

man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

"Do not err, my beloved brethren." These are the words of James the Apostle of Jesus: and I do not think they are in contradiction of the ideas entertained of God by his beloved Master, but rather that the brief and universal form in which he instructed his disciples and followers, to pray to the Father, were either, not fully understood, or not faithfully reported by the Evangelists.

Indeed, Prayer is so sacred and so sublime a thing—and was so understood by Jesus, that it is rather a thing to be *felt* than a subject to be discoursed about: *too holy* to be heard of men—*too large* for utterance.

"When thou prayest," says Jesus, "enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

My dear friends,—we see every where about us evidences of the *being*, and the *power*, and the *glory*, of God; but if we would commune with Him,—if we would obtain strength, from the source of strength; light from the source of light; love from the source of love; a ray of divinity to cheer our path from the source and essence of all that is divine—if we would "draw nigh unto God," and assimilate ourselves—as far as humanity can assimilate itself—unto His divine perfections, we must shut out the world;

—close the door of our consciousness on the world's vanities; we must see Him, *privily*, in that Temple where He is always present—in that “Holy of Holies” where His spirit resides—in the *secret recesses of our own souls*. There our sincerity is our *Intercessor*; we shall need no other *Mediator*. There may be self-deception in our act—and this there will be, if there be not *real piety* and *child-like Trust*—but in that *presence* there will be no pretences—no hypocrisy: there will be worship though our tongue be unable to articulate our prayer.

Here words are as superfluous as they are felt to be inadequate,—and Flippancy is abashed, and Eloquence is dumb! And surely this THOUGHT *that is too great for utterance*, whether it be joy, or grief, or fear, or hope, or penitence, or gratitude, or trustfulness or praise,—the more unspeakable it is—the *greater will be our worship*.

It is then we feel that God is all Truth—all Love; that *thought* is infinite; that Spirit is *indestructible*, that *the Soul is necessarily immortal*.

We feel that behind the world of sense is *thought*—the *prior* thought—that was anterior to its existence, that gave it being, and must outlive all the phases of its infinite mutations—itself alone immutable.

It is here we see the divinity that dwells in man:—and thenceforward God has all our worship,—Man our love: Selfishness is swallowed up in Sympathy; and in every man we recognise a brother.

It is *then* we begin to understand the phase of mind through which the Apostle Paul was passing when he wrote what you will find in the 2nd Chapter of his 1st Epistle to

the Corinthians—9. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. 10. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man,—but the spirit of God. 12. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13. Which things also *we* speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth:—comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14. But the natural man (that is the worldly man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can *he know* them because they are spiritually discerned. 15. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

My dear friends, this Spirituality, which all possess though we do not all cherish it, cultivate it, and live for it, this Spirituality is every thing.

Behind every thing is Thought, Intellect, Spirit, Soul—the only thing that is indestructible, never-dying, and eternal.

All the works of our hands, the things we fabricate, and use, and buy, and sell, are the perishing products of that which is itself unseen, imperishable, and immortal.

Our Cities, Churches, Houses, Monuments, Pictures, Statues, Books; our corn-fields with their yellow-harvests; our Gardens with their blooms, are, at once the result and

evidence of *Soul* which is the unseen spiritual-planner and Author of them all.

The Books we read, the Laws we obey, are not printed Books, and written edicts merely: these things, so named, are only the outward and visible signs and evidences of the invisible and spiritual soul of man, their Author, which is itself a ray from God, who is the Infinite Soul of the Universe, of which what we call Nature—the earth, the sea, the starry heavens—are but the sensible signs—the evidences visible to our sight.

Not by looking out on Nature with our eyes, and by touching the objects around us with our hands, are these things known to us. No! it is by looking inwards—leaving these mere signs and evidences to find the *Reality* of the intangible Existence they represent—in our own souls:—it is here we meet our God.

The Deity can only be “spiritually discerned,”—not by the outward eye, but by the light of the understanding mind. All Good comes from within. There only we find the great truths which flow in upon us continually from God. It is there we perform our worship—there only that our first and best lesson in Religion must be learned.

And what is this lesson? He who has read his Bible, and acquainted himself with the grand utterances of the highest and purest minds of past ages, and who has, moreover, probed into the secret thoughts of those who live and breathe in hope and fear, and partial trust around him—there learns what he and all men so intensely yearn to know—that it is God who speaks to him from the mysterious chamber of his soul.

From that moment, what has he to do with Fear? What with the world of sense, save *to do good therein*? The heart can now take holiday. The man is free. New hopes come to him like summer blossoms—Old cares fall off like withered Autumn leaves.

Such, my dear friends, is the ideal of that "Pure Religion" which influenced the life and tintured all the teachings of Jesus, who knew the heart and wants of man so well! Such was the ideal standard of the Evangelists and the Apostles: and such was the ideal—more shadowy and indistinct perhaps—which pervaded the writings of the Prophet-bards of an earlier time. They knew God only as we know Him. They communed with Him, as we must, spiritually, and His revelations of Himself came to them from within.

Let us, like them, abstract ourselves in our secret moments from the outer world, and doubt not some whispers of His Goodness will come to us.

"Draw nigh to God," says the Apostle James, "and He will draw nigh to you." If you thus "worship Him in spirit and in truth" you will overcome all the temptations with which it is His divine will to try you.

Your homage, though it be wordless will be sincere. You will strive to be holy, as He is holy, righteous, as He is righteous, perfect, as He is perfect; loving to one another, as He is loving to all.

You will be admonished against the Pharisaical sin, reprehended by Jesus, of much outward display, and of all ostentation in your worship and in your acts of charity, when you remember that in all His doings, which are eminently good,—He is not seen: for God does not (if I may so express

myself) parade Himself, even before the eyes of His creatures, as the *Doer* of His sovereign acts of beneficence and boundless love. We only know of the beneficent *Doer* by the acts *done*.

Let us do our best to imitate Him in this: Let us perform what good we can in the pure spirit of kindness and humanity—not for reward, not for applause, but out of the sincerity and fulness of our Love. Let us “visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” and perform, to the best of our ability, all other acts of brotherly kindness—not that we may be seen of men, but that we may be the unostentatious channels of those blessings which after all, are not ours, but *His*—who is the unseen Bestower of them all.

Infinite are the modes of doing good. The Samaritan of the Parable was richer in sympathy, than in worldly goods. The poorest are richer in the means which the in-dwelling spirit of kindness places at our disposal than the richest are in material wealth. Through what is called Poverty, thousands of us are constrained to say to a fellow-creature in distress—“Silver and Gold have I none, but that which I have will I give unto thee”:—and if this be only a kind cheering word—so it be a heartfelt, honest word,—the benevolent utterer thereof will be “blessed in his deed.”

My dear friends, in Pure Religion there are no pretences: there is no pomp of Piety: there is none of that self-righteous arrogance which seems to say to a humbler brother—“Stand aside. I am holier than thou.” It is modest in its demeanour, but immovable in its simple faith. In it, there is no levity, nor gloom.

Its first essential is that “Knowledge and love of God”

revealed to us in the Scriptures, and tested in the Soul. All beyond is natural, easy, and inevitable.

He whose words have afforded us the basis of our discourse to-day—the Apostle James—thus describes the stages of this Pure Religion in our outward character, and in our souls;

He says,—“The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

And the fruit of Righteousness is sown in *peace of them that MAKE peace.*”

My brethren, and dear friends, “Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all. Amen.”



PHILOSOPHY.

“Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy.”—COL. ii. 8.

EXTENSIVELY pernicious has been the use made, throughout Christendom, of these words of Paul. “Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy,” has been the burden of all pulpit teaching for many a weary age.—It has been unreason’s reason for the suppression of reason, ever since religion degenerated into a mystery, and preaching became a trade.

My dear Friends.—Where are those Fly-by-nights, the Bats, during the summer sunshine? and where is the abiding place of the Owls?—What the sun is to the system it illumines, Reason is to the Human race.—Hide it from us by the blanket of dogmatism, and what are we but bats and owls?—Of the nine hundred millions of the Human Family, probably eight hundred millions are always groping their way to the grave under the awful shadow of this cloud!—A sort of twilight lights the other ninth!—Rejoicing in this twilight, *thousands* of us come abroad (especially on our Sabbaths) like the birds which rejoice in the sunshine;—but *where* are the besmirched *millions* who spin and make our garments—our holiday finery!—who make and prepare our

food; mow our meadows;—dig our gardens;—plough our fields;—print our books and newspapers; make our railways; construct our ships; and man them; who burrow in the earth's dark entrails for our Iron, and our Copper, and our Coals; who make our bricks, and build our Houses, Palaces, Churches, Towns; These and their Families, where are they?—Where the Bats are during the daytime! in holes, and clefts, and corners:—stowed away out of sight, like lumber, in *compelled* darkness,—less happy than the Bats and Owls!—This twilight of reason begets a “Worldly Wisdom,” and the bulk of us are only “Worldly Wise.”—Our Philosophy adapts itself to *this permitted twilight, this semi-darkness* to which our teachers stint us; and we need the Apostle's caution, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy.”—Philosophy might have a *religious* basis, or it might have what is called a secular one. If *true*, however, they are the same thing; for true Religion is true Philosophy, and true Philosophy is true Religion.

PHILOSOPHY means, therefore, *or should mean*, a SYSTEM OF TRUTH, which shows us *all we need*, and *all we are*, and all we should be.—Of course PAUL, who was himself a Philosopher, means in this passage, *false* Philosophy.—The context proves this—“Beware lest any man spoil you through' philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”—Paul means, therefore, Philosophy built on opinion, on Faith, on Hearsay, on Fraud, on appearances, on Injustice, on unrighteous power! Philosophy which believes in blind necessity, abnegates a hereafter, and denies a God.—Of all such unreasonable and vain philosophy the Apostle says

"Beware!" and well he might! for how vain and useless is that Philosophy which has not a Beneficent God for its Basis,—an eternal Heaven for its hope! and how *unreasonable* to build a system (which ought to be *certain* truth) on Injustice, or on appearances, or on power, or on Faith, Hearsay, Opinion, Fraud!—Of all such the *reasoning* Apostle, the Philosophic Paul, warns us to "Beware."—It is not *reason*, you will perceive, against which the Apostle launches his interdict, but, against "Science falsely so called,"—against all Philosophy which lacks a REASONABLE basis, and a righteous end. Paul is undoubtedly a great stickler for FAITH, but the Faith *he* pleads for is not *profitless and blind belief*,—CREDENCE WITHOUT PROOF: it is, on the contrary, for the Faith which he defines to be "the substance of things hoped for, the EVIDENCE of things not seen." He pleads for the resurrection of men from the dead, for a *Spiritual* resurrection—not the material resurrection preached by the Churches—for he says "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50). He pleads then for our immortality; without which, *Truth itself*, nay, even the GOD OF TRUTH, were nothing to us; our existence would be purposeless, and our threescore years of progress *vain*! This is obvious, and we proceed to ask ourselves—Is it *probable*, is it even POSSIBLE, that God has done anything in vain? Is it possible that He has given us *reason* as the means of our progress; made us perceive *by means of this same reason*, that progress is *vain* if not ETERNAL; and thence, as a necessary inference from this obvious fact, compelled us to hope, and to *believe*, that this progress must be eternal, and that man, must be *immor-*

tal—is it possible, I ask, that God has endowed us with the reason which enables to perceive these things, only to disappoint the hope He himself has raised within us, and to falsify the reason on which He himself has enabled us to build this hope?

REASON, my dear friends, no less than “revelation” furnishes us with an everlasting answer to this question, and the answer is an everlasting “NO!” Man therefore must be immortal, and *in vain would revelation tell us this* if REASON did not supply us also with this “faith” concerning the *reality*—the “*substance*,” as Paul terms it, of things HOPED for—this *evidence* of THINGS NOT SEEN:—The Ox and the Ass are now what they were at the creation. The one licketh up the grass, and is slaughtered to become our food; the other browses on coarse herbs and thistles, and patiently bows his back and bears our burdens, whilst a few of *us* men (and ALL *might*, and *ought*—and if selfishness would give them the opportunity—all would) ascend, by the aid of reason, from this earth to Heaven; and there read by its sacred light, the beneficent purposes of our Father; and learn to rejoice in the righteousness of our God.—He is a bold man therefore, or an *ignoramus*, who dares to say to his God,—“Take back your treacherous gift of Reason: I prefer to do without it: “write me down an ass.”—And yet, not a Sabbath passes but this is said, in effect, by men in pontificals who call themselves disciples of Christ, fellow workers with Paul, and teachers of their simply sublime religion!

As the *reasonable* groundwork the proveable basis of *Christian Philosophy*, Paul *pleaded* and *argued*, wherever he

went, "for the resurrection of the dead;" for "faith" in the immortality of man. To this end he *reasoned* (not declaimed, but reasoned) "three Sabbath days with the Jews of Thessalonica,"—"reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (Acts xvii. 1 and 2). It was by REASON that Paul laid the foundation of that religion which is destined some day—and by the means of reason—to be universal. "This fellow," said the Jews of Corinth, "persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law!" (Acts xviii. 13) so they brought him before the civil tribunal to receive *there* the only confutation which "constituted authority" ever gives to the Truth,—“Your teaching is heresy; we cannot permit you to promulgate anything which is not written in *our* law.”—Be silent!—or beware!—But, although silenced at Corinth we find him at Ephesus, where "he entered the synagogue and *reasoned* with the Jews" (Acts xviii. 19).

When pleading his cause before Felix touching his belief in the "Resurrection," he *reasoned*, as was his wont;—"and as he *reasoned* of righteousness and temperance, and judgment to come," we are told that "Felix trembled."—And so would the Felixes, lay and clerical, tremble before his reasonings (if urged with his power and boldness) *now*!

In his Epistle to the Romans (xii. 1) we learn that the service we are to render to God is to be "a *reasonable* service."—The maxim of Paul (a maxim which was not only his precept, but his practice too) was "Prove all things: hold fast to that which is good" (Thessalonians v. 21). He bears willing testimony of the Jews that "they have a *zeal* of God;" but what he objects against them is, that this *zeal* is not according to *knowledge*; "for," he says, "they being

ignorant of *God's* righteousness, are going about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God" (Romans x. 2, 3).

Reason we perceive is one thing; false philosophy another; we must make a distinction therefore between the *false Philosophy* which Paul denounced, and that distinguishing Characteristic of man, his REASON, on the basis of which Paul laboured to erect the *true*;—to erect that eternal fabric of Philosophy which is profitable, equitable, righteous, and adapted to the wants and nature of reasoning man,—in a word *Christianity* as *Reason interprets what its author taught*.—To tell us, my dear friends, we are not to *reason*, is like telling the linnet he is not to sing; the swallow he is not to migrate; the eagle he is not to soar! Reason is the ladder between earth and Heaven! The chain of communication between man and God! At his creation "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living Soul."—The BRUTE is a living BODY:—The MAN is a *reasoning* SOUL.—Therefore he REASONS! and *thus*, and *thus only, infinitely ascends*. To rail at reason is to rail at God.—To shackle that which God made free, is treason to the Majesty of Heaven.—To limit its free action by creeds and Laws,—or, more monstrous still, to preach up and foster that state of things which hinders its development, and almost destroys its germ in the souls of swarming millions of our fellow-creatures, is a crime so heinous that I will borrow the words of Paul to characterise it and to declare its punishment—"Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Now "if any man defile (or defame) the temple of

God, him shall God destroy!—The temple of God is holy which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians iii. 16, 17). But, my friends, this sacrilege is systematically committed nevertheless: and if we will open our eyes to the physical and mental condition of eight ninths of the human race, we may see its fruits.—Not only are men *not Christians*, but with God's best Gift left undeveloped, God's image obscured, within them, they are not MEN: and by Law, and by common consent, they are not permitted to enjoy the RIGHTS of men. Is this state of things to continue for ever? —God forbid!

How came this state of things to be?

If the Ox and the Horse had the gift of Reason, you would not be able to drive the one in docile droves to the shambles and to link the other to the drudgery of the Wain, and the Plough, and the Omnibus and the Mill:—at least, not so easily as at present.—Reduce Man as nearly as possible to the same condition, and overawe him by unrighteous Power, and you may lead him to the slaughter house we call a battle field; or chain him to the drudgery of the overgrown workshop into which we have converted the world; in other words, you may make him spin and weave that which he shall never wear—build that which he shall never inhabit,—print that which he shall never profit by—create those superfluous conveniences and needless luxuries which he shall never partake of—produce those riches, and that magnificence, the enjoyment of which he shall no more participate in, or be deemed worthy of, than was the poor film spinning worm which produced the material of the silken garments I see around me, deemed worthy of the undisturbed

possession of that shroud of film which Nature bid it weave.

This explains why Reason is denounced by those who call themselves Christians, but who are not Christians—who call themselves fellow-workers with Paul, but who are not his fellow-workers: who call themselves Ministers of Religion but who are merely Ministers of Mammon, and deniers of the righteousness of God. Thus we see, my dear friends, how Philosophies and Religions (falsely so called) *spoil* the world and enslave mankind!—how God's temple in the human soul comes to be desecrated, denuded of its rich ornaments, polluted, despoiled, defamed!

Shall such things be for ever?

Well might Paul have warned the Colossians, who had been but recently converted from the Polytheism of the Heathens, to *beware* lest men should spoil them through Philosophy. Except that it lacks a reasonable basis—an all-righteous God—and a reasonable end—a progressive immortality for man—nothing can be more compact and perfect than the *Philosophical*, or, if you please to call it so, the *religious* system of the Hindoos.—Of inferior deities they have thousands, each having his peculiar share in the government of the world.—They have their holy Book,—the *Vedas*—Their name for GOD, their principal Deity, is BRAHMA, who is THREE Gods or *Deities* in ONE :—BRAHMA, VISHNA, and Mahésa. VISHNA the second “person” (so to speak) of the trinity, left his seat in heaven and became *incarnate*, and on earth received the name of Chrishna, and is to this day the saviour of the Hindoos. He was meek, humble, benevolent, and washed the feet of his

Brahmins, or priests. He is held to be superior to every Prophet ; for whilst *they* had only a portion of divinity within them, He *was* the Divinity—the second person of the Hindoo trinity. “In the Sanscrit language,” says that great Scholar and Linguist Sir William Jones—“in the Sanscrit Language, compiled upwards of two thousand years ago, we have the whole story of this INCARNATE DEITY, this CHRISHNA. He was born of a virgin of the royal line of Devâci—cradled among herdsmen and miraculously escaped in his infancy from the reigning tyrant of the country of his birth. After his mission on earth had been accomplished, he returned to Heaven.” But how did the simple-minded men whom he came to save *Know* that Chrishna was a Deity—was God? Was not the purity of his character, the wisdom of his teaching, the grandeur of his mission—his Piety, his perfect equity, his righteousness, his surpassing love, sufficient to convince them that his nature and his mission were divine? No! *Miracles* were needed to accomplish this.—You will smile when I tell you by what miracles the acute Hindoo was destined to be convinced :—Chrishna, when an infant, opened his mouth, and therein showed to his mother the whole universe in all its magnificence: and when but seven years old, he held up a mountain on the top of his little finger, only a Deity, only Vishna, could do this! He also “slew a terrible serpent and raised the dead.”

As *Christians*, and as *reasonable beings*, we are bound to pronounce this tale which the Hindoo believes in, a FABLE, forged by the Brahmins for the purposes of power,—and *behold the RESULT!* Look at the swarming millions of

India—their fanaticism—their superstition—their serfdom—their degeneracy and debasement—their utter helplessness:—Look at it! and read in it—of this irrational system,—the *pitiable*—but the *natural*—the inevitable result!—The HINDOO IS RELIGIOUS *enough according to his notions of religion*. Not an act of his life but must be a *religious* act: and these we are told, he performs so scrupulously as to shame us Christians, who are too prone to make *our* religion a *sentiment*, and *not* what it should be—the ruling motive of every action of our lives. But his religion—a *religion of empty forms and superstitious observances*—IS FALSE: and his scrupulous obedience to it *is his bane*. He is a degraded slave: and so long as he holds to it *he will remain a slave*. “Beware” then, my dear friends, “lest any man” by robbing you of your reason, “spoil you through Philosophy!”—The great *motive* for the denunciation of Reason is to wed you to empty forms,—to beguile you *with the shadow*, whilst it robs you of the celestial *substance* of Religion. Be not deceived! “Let no man spoil you through Philosophy!”—Whatever is *right* is rational:—whatever is equitable, whatever is holy, whatever is true;—whatever it is proper to avoid, necessary to believe or good to do, is *rational*.—Whatever is *irrational* we may safely leave to those who prefer darkness to light.—Were the Owls of the animal world, to turn preachers with intent to woo the soaring songsters of the sunlit Sky, to the comfortable twilight of the crumbling tower, small would be their success, methinks, compared with what has hitherto attended the gloomy oratory of the Human Owls who plead for that “dim religious glimmer” shed by Faith

upon the sons of men, to the *neglect*, if not the extinguishment, of God's Lamp of Reason in our Souls,—which is our proper light:—that light by which a few among Earth's children have scaled the Heavens, numbered and weighed the Stars—dissected Sunbeams—snatched the Lightning from the clouds, read old-world revelations in the ancient rocks—and picked their shining way through the mysterious paths of Nature up to God!

But is not Reason liable to error? Yes! or it would not be Reason. And has it not misled men into false philosophies and false theories about *God*, and *Nature*—and Humanity?—It *has*, and so has written Revelation; but Reason's misleading fact has ever been, and still is, that abnormal condition of the human family we just now glanced at, the degradation of the *Millions*,—reasoned on as a *natural* condition—*as a condition which is inevitable, Deity-ordained, and right.*—And if this speciously pleaded falsehood had not some show of truth about it, even power-protected selfishness would not dare to defend that false, reason-hating Christianity, which, contrary to the plain teaching of the gospel, encourages the state of things in which these false philosophies batten and have their growth.

The brief limits to which these, our Sabbath discourses, are restricted, forbids me to do more than make a passing allusion to those philosophical systems of the day which assert that matter and its manifestations contain the whole of knowable Truth; and which ridicule all reasoning based on the existence of a Spiritual Creation, and the intangible substance of the thinking and reasoning Soul. But, thus to allude to them *here* is, I hope and believe, enough. Such

profitless and baseless systems have always existed: and they are those against which the Apostle warns all men to "beware." Paul, however, foresaw that a time would come when men "will not endure sound doctrines; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Therefore he bids Timothy (to whom the epistle in which these words occur is addressed) to Preach the Word: be instant *in season: out of season: reprove: rebuke: exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine* (2 Timothy, ch. iv.).

Paul had evidently seen in his own day a tendency to mystify and distort the pure and simple teaching of Jesus: which has long since grown as we all know—and is still growing, to so blasphemous a height in the Church of Rome. It is therefore to this defection in the Christian system, and to the consequences to which it leads, that the brief remainder of this discourse shall be directed.

Whatever professes to be a moral and religious truth, is a system of Philosophy; and if a false system, it is a *false Philosophy*, and comes within the category of that teaching, against which we are so emphatically warned. That the Christianity of Christendom *is* a false Philosophy, a brief survey of its leading tenets, and its tone of teaching, will abundantly prove.

Paul commands us to "Prove all things."

The CHURCHES command us to take everything on trust.

According to Paul, and according to the Deity-bestowed constitution of the human mind,—whatever is REASONABLE *is true and right*; and whatever is UNreasonable, *is false and*

WRONG:—but—according to the teachings of the Churches—Whatever is reasonable (if opposed to their creeds and formularies) *is wrong*: and whatever is *unreasonable* (if asserted to be true in their creeds and formularies) *is right*.

Consistently with his maxim, "Prove all things," PAUL *reasoned* well, knowing that profitable belief can come only through the evidence that compels conviction; but—consistently with their natural hatred of reason—the CHURCHES *dogmatize*, well knowing that of the truth of their irrational system, they have no evidence to give.

PAUL admonishes us that a human being is a veritable "temple of God"—a "holy temple"—in which His Spirit resides: but—

THE CHURCHES tell us that a human being is a very sink of Depravity, in which from our earliest infancy, evil personified, that is to say the Devil, takes up his abode.

On this assumption, of INNATE DEPRAVITY, the Churches construct a "Scheme of Salvation,"—but neither Paul nor the other Apostles, nor their divinely-endowed Master, had any share in the construction of such a "Scheme."

Jesus teaches us that to worship God in spirit and in truth, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is the whole of Religion, but —

The CHURCHES tell us that we must worship God (or rather Jesus, whom they elevate above God) by means of rites and superstitious observances, and that to love our neighbour as ourselves is quite out of Nature and impossible: thus by implication making Jesus a visionary, and an impostor, whilst they ask us to reverence him as a God,—as *the* God in whom we live and move and have our being!

JESUS was a Unitarian, that is, he taught the belief in one God.

To make a mystery of their system the Churches are heathens *to* those, and with those, who have a fancy for Polytheism: and Unitarians *to* those, and with those, whom open and avowed Polytheism might offend.

When they exhibit as Heathens, Presto!—and one is three!—when they wish to exhibit God as an unit, Presto!—and three are one!

How can we expect to put down card-sharpers, and thimble-riggers (clever tricksters, though dishonest) whilst we permit these Jugglers (who thrive on the credulity of the ignorant) to “Play such fantastic tricks before high Heaven as make the Angels weep?” These, my friends, are *some* of the HERESIES of a Church, which centuries ago separated itself from the Church of Rome, leaving *more* and *worse* behind. All honour to it for its boldness! But we live in a critical time. Not only is our advanced post to be maintained: we must go forward or be beaten back.—There is Hindostan to be Christianized: the fables and superstitions of Brahmaism to be swept away, seventy or eighty millions of slaves to this degrading system to be weaned from their errors, and raised to the condition of free agents and rational Men. But, how?—unless Christianity—purified from its own Heresies and Superstitions, and Fables—shall attempt the task? For what would Brahmaism say to *Christianism (as it is)* in its impotent effort to convert the Hindoo?—“Physician, heal thyself!”—“Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine *own* eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy *brother's* eye.”

BUT THE TASK WILL NOT BE ATTEMPTED. The Church of Rome has *the Reformation to blot out*. The reformed Church has *its reformed position to maintain*. Work enough for both for an age or two to come. The struggle has begun. What will be the issue? If Rome succeeds, farewell to Religion! farewell to progress! farewell to freedom! farewell to everything but hope!—If the Reformers succeed, this must be the *modus operandi* of their action: They must admit their old enemy Reason, as an ally: they must widen the pale of their communion and admit the unenfranchised masses: fraternize with them, educate them, improve their condition, elevate them to the rank of men and brethren; fight with them for equity—for evenhanded Justice;—make their cause, not the cause of sectarianism or of Party, or of Class, but the cause of Truth, and pure religion;—of Humanity in the abstract,—of Righteousness:—of God!

In this struggle (which the daily widening spread of Jesuitism in the Church of England warns us is at hand) the question I would ask, which makes all I have said applicable to ourselves, and for which I have *said* it all, is this—Shall *we* who have renounced the Heresies I have been exposing, *help the Reformers*, or, by standing indolently by, take part with Rome?—I think I know your answer.

My friends, whence comes this new born zeal among the “upper ten thousand” for Romish Candles, Crucifixes, Priestly processions, Genuflexions before the highly decorated altar; and, though last, not least, for the Confessional?—Whence the revived taste for gothic restorations, mediæval designs, pre-Raphaelite Art,—all of them adroitly

introduced within these twenty years to familiarize our senses with things and their associations which England once dreamed were dead and buried at the Reformation?

Is it zeal for Religion? or for what?—To the priesthood, power is ever dear. But why is it so cheerfully yielded to them by the laity?

I have frequently asked myself these questions: and as frequently replied to them with this threefold answer.

First. It is because Progress, real *Progress*—is being made under the more liberal and enlightened System of that Church which gave us the Bible, and full permission to read it, and interpret it for ourselves; that this Jesuitism is encouraged, and is thence growing day by day, in boldness, persistency, and strength: for here is an angry shadow looking on which says, or means to say, "This Bible reading must be stopped. Return we to the Discipline of Rome."

Second. England is drunk,—reeling drunk with riches, and needs a sleepless, watchful, ever-vigilant *Protector*: What Guardian fitter for the charge than Rome?

Third. One section of the people is intent on accumulating riches. Another, and a growing section, is reading the books and newspapers daily issuing from a giant Press, which the race after riches keeps in action.—But there is a third section keeping zealous watch—the section which wields the power. This section says to the reading section, what Festus said to Paul—"Much learning doth make thee mad."—A strait-waistcoat is the next thought: and the very straitest of strait-waistcoats is always kept in readiness for such lunatics—by Rome.

Such, my dear friends, if I rightly read them, are the

prominent signs of the time we live in.—Let us turn our knowledge of them to good account.—Let us do what we can to encourage EDUCATION—among those Pariahs, of Society—the Children of the Poor.—Let us adopt means to disseminate a rational Christianity among their Parents; and to extend its principles, and our own influence for good among all classes of the people.—Rome is sleepless, let us be up and doing.—As *false* Religion thrives less in semi-darkness, be assured that the *true* will best flourish in the full blaze of day. We have seen that Paul is with us, that Jesus is with us, that God is with us, and the spirit of Truth and Righteousness and Love. Let us trust in these. Let us be assured that the divinest part of CHARITY is *action*—that PRAYER is *action*—that Religion is *action*—that of all Infidelity there is none worse than unfaithfulness to the light of Reason and the love of truth, which God in His beneficence has placed within ourselves—That there is no FAITHLESSNESS so injurious to Humanity and so derogatory of God, as faithlessness in the *power* and *world-wide value* of that Lamp of Reason, and that attribute of Deity, holy and beautiful as the loftiest imagination can paint it—Truth. Let us continue to believe in these: and let us endeavour to convince a faithless world by our example, that there is a higher and a holier motive to action than the accumulation of Riches and the sweets of Power:—I mean that happiness which springs from our fellowship with Jesus—that nearest approach we can make to the boundless beneficence of God—the *ever-multiplying blessedness of doing good*.

More favoured than the Jews of old, we need no rainbow covenant-spanning the evening sky: the sign and seal of

God's covenant with humanity has its everlasting impress in our Souls.—In the language of the "Heralds," we bear on our shields of Knighthood "Spheres and stars" in beaming gold on a field of "azure," in proud memorial that we derived our being, and hold our inalienable possessions—our dearest Rights—from Him! and to Him, who has thus distinguished us, be all gratitude, and praise, and Glory, and Honor, for evermore.

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

“The disciples came unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and placed him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you Except ye become converted as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven.”—MATTHEW xviii. 1-4.

IN the course of the Gospels, we find diverse hints, not to say instances of that leaven of Worldliness among the Disciples and immediate followers of Jesus which betoken petty jealousies among them, and exhibit that reprehensible love of power and pre-eminence which may be gained by favour or accident, rather than by natural or acquired excellence and genuine worth. Luke ix. 46-48, relates (though somewhat differently) the same incident. Speaking of the Disciples he says,—“There arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child and set him by him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me: for he that is east among you all, the same shall be great.”

In both accounts there is (in effect) the same unamiable question, replied to by the same impressive and beautiful reproof.

It is to the *latter*,—to the reply of Jesus, that I wish to direct your more special attention *now*.—

A little child is the type of what men *ought* to be, and *must* be, to be happy: and those who have outgrown, or rather degenerated from, the state which is natural to childhood, to regain it must be “converted,”—must “be born again,” and “become as little children,” before they can taste of the abiding blessedness of Heaven.

It becomes us therefore to enquire into these two particulars:—

First, What are the chief characteristics of this state of mind, so peculiar to the child? and,

Secondly, What is Heaven; without which one had better never have been born?

I purpose attempting an answer to the second of these questions first; namely, “What is Heaven?”

In reply to certain questions of his Disciples, Jesus told them, “The kingdom of God *is within you*.” *Heaven is within you*. meaning thereby that state of conscious felicity which nothing but an implicit trust in an everywhere-present God can give;—that sense of relationship to Him which makes all intentional wrong doing impossible;—and that continual *perception of His Goodness* which imparts a hue of holiness and beauty even to inanimate things.

Heaven therefore means a *State of Mind*. This is *the Substance*. The *Time* and *Place*,—the *where* and *when* are only *accidents*.



Wherever there is a Being *conscious of as much felicity as he can bear*, THERE is Heaven. It is his *consciousness of the felicity* that is his Heaven. It is his *Soul's continual feast* amid the Sublimity and Beauty which environ him—his *love of Goodness*, and *of doing Good*—and his trust in the *All-Father, God*, out of which alone, Heaven can be extracted.

I pass therefore to the other question,—What are those mental and other characteristics which throw the sanctity and radiance of Heaven around the Child?

Of course, there is in every child, at first, that primal Innocence, which has not yet tasted of “the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil;” the Innocence of Ignorance suggestive of the object to which we liken it; the Innocence of Doves and Lambs. But the Dawn of Knowledge soon ensues: the telegraph wires of Intelligence are soon laid down; by which the Angels of Affection pass and repass in sweet and speechless harmonies, between the Mother and her babe; and heart with heart holds wordless intercourse; the prelude to the coming intercourse of Mind with Mind.

The Child's first Innocence is the *type* of Heaven; *not Heaven itself*; but the state which shall be Heaven when the knowledge of good and evil comes to dwell with it. Then the sweet heaven of childhood *is*: and this Heaven continues *until actual evil* enters and drives Innocence away. Then a strife commences between Good and Evil: the war of Life, “the wear and tear” of heart and intellect begins. Shall GOOD which loves to dwell alone with Innocence; or EVIL which will drive her hence, prevail? When Evil is conquered, Innocence returns; the celestial twins Innocence and Knowledge are one again; and the sweet Heaven of Childhood

once more *is*,—with all its love of Goodness, in all its forms; and all its trust in God!

But there is this difference between our early and later Heaven;—*the Heaven we conquer* is more *actual*, more *real*, than that which falls on our young life, as sunshine falls on flowers. The first in the nature of things, cannot continue long. Even could we preserve our Innocence (as Jesus did) there still must be the *strife*; for Evil will attack the citadel of our Souls; and will enter it if not repulsed; that is, “the lusts of the flesh” will strive for mastery; and, if they gain it, knowledge is made captive, and obliged to do ignominious battle for the Conqueror. And this, my friends, is the sad state of things which now actually exists around us. Evil,—that is *Sin*, dons the *colors* and assumes the *name* of Righteousness; and Knowledge, turned traitor to the Truth, fights its battles, in Press and Pulpit, even without a blush.

To give an impressive view of the characteristics of Childhood, retained in all their simplicity and integrity through the temptations and difficulties of a lifetime; and to awaken your sympathies for the multitudes of children whose characters are never understood; whose ardent souls are never developed; whose wounded sensibilities bleed amid the un pitying Solitude of the crowded city, or the Family, or the School; whose most sacred thoughts are never whispered in a friendly ear; whose holiest hopes (which never find an utterance) are crushed; whose bright young rainbow-tinted aspirations about God, and Heaven, and starry worlds, and Seas, and Rivers, and Flowers, and Men, “and all the fair variety of things” are all of them *untold*,

and wrecked, and doomed to disappointment,—to give you an idea of the strength of Faith in Childhood that can conquer these; and to excite the sympathy which it would be desirable to awaken for the annual thousands who, not having strength for the unnatural conflict sink into Sensuality or the grave—*we want the actual* LIVER *of such a life*, and then we want the pen of inspiration to draw his portrait.

Jesus of Nazareth lived the Life. But of the Childhood of Jesus the inspired Penman of the *canonical* Gospels gives us but the merest and most imperfect glimpse. Let us be thankful even for this.

Jesus the so perfect man, seems always to have retained the diviner characteristics of the Child: And he was the only teacher of Moral Truth, who, from actual possession, acquired the authority to commend them in never-to-be-forgotten precepts to the memory of mankind.

When he blessed little Children, and when he reproved his Disciples for their self-seeking, with the words of our text, he was inspired by what he felt within him of the divinity (unrecognised of men) that lives (as yet unspoiled by the cold world's teachings) in the instincts and feelings of the Child. He *knew* them, *felt* them, had not outlived them. They were still fresh and radiant in him at all times, —when he pronounced his inimitable Sermon on the Mount—when he went up into the Temple to pray—when he uttered all his exquisite parables—when he walked through the Corn-fields on the Sabbath day—when he taught his Disciples his prayer for all men, to the Father of all—when he talked to them the last time before his crucifixion—when he washed their feet, to teach them, by

his own example, the sweet lesson of humility—when he brake the bread at the last supper—and when he prayed his last prayer for his persecuters amid the agonies he suffered on the cross—In all this and in all the recorded acts and sayings of his blameless life, he exhibited, with the wisdom of the mature man, all the loving sensibilities and sweet graces of the child. His emblems of illustration were almost all of them the things he had loved in his childhood, and lived among in his youth.

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not; neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”—

Whilst he had pondered over the page of his nation's history, and had followed in thought the sumptuous King of Israel through all his phases of regal grandeur and magnificence he still preferred the simple beauty of the spotless-lily that in childhood had been a companion to him and a gentle friend; which, when he had slumbered during the noon-day heat amid the sheltered nooks they bloomed in and made fragrant, had waved over him like stooping angels, to guard his slumbers; and as gently as persuadingly to preach to him when he should again awake—the holy lesson of reliance on God; to bid him “take no thought for the morrow” as to “what he should eat and what he should drink, and wherewithal he should be clothed,” seeing that the All-Father “feedeth the young Ravens when they cry for food,” and giveth verdure to the grass, and a robe of beauty, woven of sunbeams, to the little daisy blooming at his feet! “And how much better” they seem to ask him, “are you than they?”

Ay, *then*, when the lilies of Nazareth preached this beautiful lesson to the young heart of the lonely child, what indeed was Solomon King of Israel, in all his glory and magnificence, to *him*, compared with these mute Teachers shedding their sweet influences around him, and whispering of the unutterable beatitudes of Heaven, and counselling this trustfulness in God!

Ill understood by natures less delicately sensitive than his own, I can conceive this holy child (whose pure thoughts were to influence for unnumbered centuries, the human race) pursuing in silent solitude, the promptings of his own sweet wayward will among the wild flowers that neighboured his humble dwelling in his native Nazareth, and seeking there the sympathies and the teachings which the human hearts, and human lips around him could not give! Ah, who can tell what children feel when thus bereft of sympathy!—when even the mother knows nothing of the spirit that lives, with all its unutterable yearnings, within the bosom of her child!

Companionship he must have, *sympathy* he must have or die! and so *at night* the Stars, and during the daylight hours, the Spirit of Nature, the sighing winds, the sweet, low, music of the rippling waves became his counsellors and confidants; and the animals and flowers, his friends! And happy are all such neglected ones when these (as they did to the child Jesus) whisper to their bursting hearts of Heaven, and lead their thoughts to God!

We know so little of his Parents; so little of his Mother, (although the Church of Rome has lately made a goddess of her!) that we have only surmises for our guide to a knowledge of the Childhood of Jesus. But from the few indistinct glimpses that we find in the Gospels, and chiefly from

the incident mentioned by Luke (which I am about to read to you) the fact appears to have been much as I have attempted to describe it.

There seems to have been estrangement rather than coincidence of feeling and affection: for, "when he was twelve years old," Luke tells us in the 2nd ch. of his Gospel, that his Father and Mother carried him with them to Jerusalem, to observe, as was their wont, the feast of the Passover, agreeably to the ordinances of their Religion. "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his Mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the Company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not they turned back to Jerusalem. And it came to pass that after three days they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the Doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, how is it that ye sought me; wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? and they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, but his Mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

Let me stop to remark that the letter and spirit of this narrative are totally at variance with the tale of "the annunciation," and of the other than human parentage of Jesus,

otherwise why this leaving of the child behind them in Jerusalem? why their amazement at his sayings and doings in the Temple? why the tone of reproof in the words "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?" why (and especially after witnessing the extraordinary phase of his character in the Temple)—why speak to him of Joseph as his father, "Thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing"? and how happened it when he said unto them "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" that "they understood not the saying which he spake unto them"? How should his mother have forgotten the words of the angel, of which she herself must have been the repeater, if it were true that the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great; and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him, the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no end"?

Whence this forgetfulness! This wonderment! This disobedience! This non-comprehension of the saying of her Son, if this tale of the annunciation be true?

No, he returned with them to Nazareth, and was still subject to their authority; but they knew him not; they still wondered what he meant by his strange words "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business:—" for he had a Father, not known to them, up among the stars; or away in the fields, and among the Lilies which grew there; a Father who understood him and whom he understood; and it became a familiar and most dear fact to him, that he and his Spiritual

Father were "*one*." Meaning of course by his Father, "*Him* in whom we live, and move, and have our being." Paul in Acts xvii. 14, 28, expresses this Idea.

He told this afterwards to the world, and the world understood him not. He told this and many other figurative facts to his Disciples, but his Disciples understood him not: and I doubt if he is understood among many (especially in Christendom) even to this day.

But although mis-judged and ill-understood by those with whom he mingled in after-life (as in Childhood, he had been by his Mother, and brethren, and sisters, and near of kin,) he seems thoroughly to have understood them.

We are in the habit of deeming his character too perfect to have felt *resentments*; but the sorrows of his childhood, as well as all that was holy in it, are *remembered* in his mature life, and tinge with *something more than sadness* some of his acts and sayings as a man. When it was said to him on one occasion (Luke viii. 19, 20, 21) "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee," he "answered and said unto them, My Mother and my Brethren are they who hear the word of God and do it," and it would seem that he took no further notice of the matter.

Again: the same Evangelist relates a similar incident, (see Luke xi. 27, 28.) A woman who had been listening to his teaching exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the breasts which thou hast sucked." But he said, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

"Neither did his brethren believe in him," we are told by John (vii. 1, 10,)—but on one occasion they publicly taunted

him, and met with an equally public rebuke;—a rebuke in which there is certainly “more of *sorrow* than of *anger*,” but it serves to show us that *among his brethren and sisters*, he had no confidants, no sympathisers, no friends! One of his sayings has come to be a proverb among us; “a prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.” And the occasion on which he uttered it (Mark vi. 4) shows that it had a particular personal reference to himself: and to an ardent and loving nature, very poignant and bitter must have been the thought! As a man mingling in the crowd, and partaking in the turmoil of life the thought to him, though *bitter*, would have been *bearable*: but *forced on him in his childhood*, it may be seen *how utterly desolate his childhood was!* It did not crush him. He found a *God* among the stars that nightly twinkled over his native Galilee; a *Father* who communed with his young heart *at all times*,—wherever the green grass waved around him, or the white Robed Lily bloomed!—But, *how many thousands* of young hearts are always *being crushed*, and *rendered refugeless and desolate through the want of these home sympathies*, can only be guessed at, but never known!

Jesus found a *spiritual Father* in the depths of this solitude and a well-spring of *Truth* in the depths of his own inner being; and an exhaustless love for afflicted humanity in his own bosom; *and he remained a child*. He perceived however, (and well he knew the cause of it!) that other men and women had outlived *their* childhood,—had taken the cold unfeeling world into their bosoms, and banished thence the Heaven that blessed them *once*, and would have blessed them ever!—and therefore on the occurrence of two of the

many memorable incidents of his public life and ministry, he declared little children to be veritable types of the Kingdom of Heaven; adding, for instruction to ourselves, as well as for those who heard him, "Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!"

The child then with its insatiable thirst for knowledge; its wonderful Logic; its lightning-like Intuitions; its vivid Fancy; its unalterable love of the new and wonderful; its keen and easily-wounded sensibilities; its trustfulness; its truthfulness; its hope,—is seen to be essentially a holy thing; a celestial visitant to this lower world; a ray of Divinity; a thought of God, vivified and made man, that it might be trained in His truth; feel His love; and exercise it; and ultimately return to Him.

Oh, let the Mother never forget that the Child which (in its early infancy) she presses to her bosom, and fondly calls her own; or the young prattling questioner at her knee, who wants to know all she can tell it (and far more) about God, and Heaven, and the inner life of all things—*is such a Being*; and that to impart to it, *the first lessons in Mercy, and Love, and practical Holiness*, is a task entrusted to HER. And were this task everywhere adequately performed, my friends, the *Preacher's* office would be everywhere a sinecure.

It is *bad teaching* that has filled the world with *Sin*! It is the *state of things* which obliges us to think more how we shall get perishable riches, and temporal honors, and empty class-distinctions,—and in thousands upon thousands of cases how we shall get bread for our children, that leads to our forgetfulness of what our children *are*, and what they need

essentially; and which failing to obtain, cause *so many young hearts to bleed* in childhood; and *all*, in after life, *to sin*.

And, this my friends, is the brief *History of sin*!

Every tall Temple, every Church Tower and Spire which catches our eye in the Landscape, *proclaims* that the ugly monster lives and flourishes in the midst of us: *but this is its History*—BAD TEACHING AND MISDIRECTED AIMS!

The way to a general reformation is long and difficult; but the beginning is easy enough, and simple enough; and it is a task we can perform *at home*. Let us find out the Heaven that is *within us*; and *return to it*: and by the light that we find there, which is the counterpart of that which burnt so brightly in Jesus, *let us educate our children*. Children again in Spirit, we shall feel once more "*the beauty of holiness*" which was the Religion of our young life; and we shall avoid, as we would avoid the raging flood for the consuming fire, GIVING TO OUR CHILDREN SO MUCH AS A VIEW of that crabbed, and repulsive and wicked THEOLOGY which is so universally taught and accepted as Religion *now*.

Of all delightful things, Religion,—the pure Religion which the young heart yearns for, is the most delightful to the uncontaminated Soul of man: and all objects in nature; and all the sciences which let us into the latent secrets of their being; and all the arts, which have a tendency to instruct, and elevate us in the scale of Humanity, are, *all of them aids and Ministers thereto*.

Be assured, my dear friends, if *the rising generation* is WICKED *the generation that is passing away* (with the Bible in its hands, and "the Lord Jesus" on its tongue) *is only passing to its account*, where the Bible and "the Lord Jesus" will

be witnesses against it; and its own sacred conscience—that worm which dieth not, its grim accuser and its Judge!

I do not deny that there are rude, coarse, sensual, untractable, and very evil natures among us—an immense number, always—and who are born so,—born with strong *physical* tendencies to Evil rather than to Good; but my friends, this is their *misfortune*, not their *fault*.

Evil dispositions indulged in, produce Evil physical organizations *to match*. These, like good ones, are *transmissible*, and those unfortunates who are born with these tendencies to evil have inherited them from their parents, either immediate, or remote: and all such are objects for our special help and pity: not for our neglect, scorn or hate.

But of this I am sure,—there are none born, however evil the tendencies they may bring with them, who are not always made worse by neglect and harshness, and—especially if the good work be commenced early enough—who are not to be reclaimed and “made whole” by sympathy, and gentleness, and love.

Beneath the Devil (or animal selfishness) which has to be exorcised or driven out, lives the sweet Angel of Human Love, whose instincts are as divine, and whose aspirations are as Rainbow-hued and lovely, as those of the angel monitor, whose gentle training and humanity may develope and draw it out.

And this is the simple duty of every follower of Jesus;—in their own homes first, and in the haunts and homes of the Poor afterwards, until society transmits *good dispositions* only, and the brute-visaged unfortunates, who are a libel on our Religion, and a disgrace to our humanity, are seen no more among us.

My friends, this is our mission: and let us *pursue* it in the true self-sacrificing spirit of Jesus, our exemplar; and in the holy faith that by educating our Children, and the Children of the Poor and the strangers among us, we shall *often*—and I know not why we should not *always*—welcome to our bosoms, guests that are worthy of all our love; yea “entertain angels unawares.” And then we may truly say with Paul (Romans xiii. 2), “In all these things we are MORE than conquerors through him that loved us:” for what are conquerors but destroyers of their species; men of blood; the products of evil, in whom the choicest gifts and highest powers are perverted,—either to originate mischief or (at the very best) to repress its *too luxuriant* growth.—But my friends, “to train up the children in the way they should go” *is to dispense with the conquerors*, by exterminating the sin and crime, which give them a *status* in the world, and find them continual employment. Yes; by educating the children we shall indeed “be more than conquerors through him that loved us;” through him who loved the children; through him who taught us *what they are*; and whose they are; and for what *end*, the germs of Goodness, and the latent love of God, which dwells in every one of them, *was given*.

Without this development, *everything that is degrading* is POSSIBLE; but RELIGION *is impossible*, and so is HEAVEN.

But, for one Parent who *avoids* this risk for his children, how many thousands—should I not rather say, how many millions—incur this risk? and if this risk is incurred knowingly, who shall say—for how many sins we may not have made ourselves responsible?—“who shall tell our audit?” For what can *Repentance* avail us, either in this life or the

next, so long as the sins arising from our default as Parents or wilfulness as Citizens, shall continue to propagate themselves, and multiply through the course of the generations?

And yet my friends, *it is this state of things* that the superstition called Christianity (not the Religion of life as *taught* and *lived* by the Nazarene) is doing its best to fasten on the world for ever!

However little we may be aware of the fact, we, with the rest of Christendom, say *this* by our acts—"There are Laws of God, than which nothing can be more sacred *except the human Institutions which have been reared by men*; God's Laws ought therefore to be obeyed—as far as they can be obeyed without prejudice to our human Institutions; which come what may,—Religion or no Religion; Heaven or no Heaven; God or no God; must not by profane reforming finger, be so much as touched."

If we would honestly express our *Social Creed* in words, thus we should write it—"All manner of sin and blasphemy against Religion, and against the eternal Laws of God, might be forgiven a man: but blasphemy against the regulations on which our civil and social Institutions are based shall not be forgiven him, either in this world or that which is to come."

To this creed every member of the body-politic is pledged, and to make this creed look religiously respectable, we are taught to bow, and we *do* bow, to the superstitions which pass for Religion among and around us and which are made to give a seeming sanction to our *social*, or rather to our *anti-social* Beliefs.

It is for this reason that "the way" of righteousness taught by Jesus, and approved by the voice of God within us, is

a dead letter, and the man treated as a maniac who would religiously carry it out.

It is for this reason that the *source* of these superstitions maintains its place in the Gospels in which the religion of Jesus is preserved and taught.

I have therefore to-day purposely touched on the source of these superstitions, I mean the tale of "the annunciation,"—which the glance we have had of the childhood of Jesus proves to be altogether fabulous and false, and therefore only worthy to be considered apocryphal, like the Gospels with their monstrous miracles and old-wives' wonders, which were excluded as false in the fourth century by the Council of Nice.

It is on this tale (found only in the Gospel of Luke, but which was copied word for word from one of the four Gospels which was so long ago condemned) that the so prevalent notion of *the Personal Divinity of Jesus* is based; thus blinding us to the fact that *the Divinity we ought to reverence* exists only *in his precepts* and not in *him*;—that the *Truth* he taught is peculiarly sacred, and not the *man*.

It is on the faith of this fiction, that we are still calling our teacher "Lord, Lord," whilst we neglect his behests;—still merely "touching the hem of his garment" to get ourselves miraculously cleansed from our sins, instead of keeping ourselves clear of the Sin, by following out his admonitions, and striving to be pure as he was pure, and "perfect even as God." It is on the strength of this apocryphal story that our religion has become a worthless and degrading "*worship*," instead of a world uplifting *work*;—a trust in *idolatrous beliefs and ceremonials*, instead of a trust in *those*

precepts of Jesus, which teach us to give ourselves, as he did, to Humanity, that we *might* thereby become Saviours and Redeemers of mankind, from the sin and suffering which is Hell, and thus enable all to find out the Heaven that is within us, and about us—which is the proffered gift, *to every man*, of an all-loving God.

These are facts, my friends, which few alone would tell you.

But the Religion here preached is in the Bible, and the form of Religion, which I have called Superstition and Idolatry, is around you, and you might see the fruits of it—rank, pestilential, and abounding in every portion of the world.

I have spoken of both with the honest plainness which every man should bring with him who presumes to occupy, though but for a moment, the post of Teacher in the House of God. And my humble but heart-felt prayer is, that what I have said to you, may through God's blessing, take deep root in your understandings, and in your hearts; that it may spring up, and grow, and ramify, in your lives and actions, and bring forth blossoms and fruits meet for an earthly paradise, and thus become fit harbingers of the far higher life to be enjoyed by the faithful and just, by the good and true alone;—in yon "Temple not made with hands,—

Eternal in the Heavens."

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

“Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.”—

JOHN viii. 32.

THESE, my friends, are the words of Jesus; words which he spake on a certain occasion, “to many Jews who believed on him.” “If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed: and ye shall know the truth, and the Truth shall make you free.”

Considering these words to be addressed to *us*, who by our presence here declare that we also claim to be reckoned as believers on his word, and to be regarded as “his disciples indeed,” it will be well to ask *of* what shall we be free, and *from* what shall we be free, when we get to know the Truth that is able to *make us* free?

To be free, is held by all men to be a great privilege; it is prized indeed, *as our most valued right*. It is in-woven in the nature of all creatures to love freedom, and to pine for it and struggle for it, when lost. *Next to life* all creatures prize their *liberty*; nay, will (for the most part) jeopardise their life in its defence. It is one of the most valuable rights bestowed by Heaven on men; whilst, bondage,—slavery,—in any of its forms, is as intolerable as it is degrading.

Then, *of what* can truth make us free? And *from what* can it free us?—It can make us free of God's church, of God's family, of God's household, of God's love and presence, of God's Kingdom in this world, and in that which is to come: And it can free us *from* Error and all its miserable, vicious, and degrading consequences.

Without that Liberty which has its foundation in Truth, Men and women are not responsible beings: Until we know what is *True*, we cannot sin against Truth: Until we know what is *Right*, we cannot sin against the Right: we can do *Wrong*; but we are not responsible. In short, without a knowledge of this Truth, we are not in reality *Men and Women*, but only full grown embryos, waiting to be born;—that is, awaiting *that second birth, which is of the Spirit*,—that bursting of the bonds of Ignorance,—that opening of the Spiritual eye to Truth; and then we are free of God's church, of God's family, and household, of God's love and presence, of God's kingdom, which shall endure for ever; and then only are we free—or may be free, from Error, and the vices and miseries which are its never-failing consequences. Great is Truth; and dear indeed is the liberty to which it introduces us,—the glorious possession it is able to make our own.

This truth is our great want. and how to know it, and where to find it, and what it is, are the most important problems we have to solve.

But these matters demand a Sermon for themselves: it is therefore not my purpose to enter upon this wide and fruitful field now. I will merely say in passing, that Truth, the Truth which is the Rock on which all morality and real

Religion rests—is this—whatever is *necessary*, and therefore *desirable* for ME, is equally *necessary* and therefore *desirable* for ALL MEN.

I need and desire the MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE:

So do all men: *Liberty*:

So do all men: *Truth*:

So do all men.

In so far as I would not, despotically, be deprived of those blessings by other men who have, naturally, no more need of them nor right to them than I have;—to the same extent I ought not, despotically, to deprive other men of these blessings, seeing I have, naturally, no more need of them, nor right to them, than they.

This is the basis of all morals—the first step to all Religion.

But, it is only recognised—as a sentiment: we do not *own* it, and *practise* it as truth. consequently, we are all in bondage to Error; and the impossible Truth we clamour for, is that spurious Truth, which leaves us at liberty to do wrong, and not that real Truth which is able to free us from this miserable bondage.

The liberty *we* love, is that freedom from restraint which enables us to “call Evil good, and Good evil; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness; to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; to be wise in our own eyes, and prudent in our own sight; to justify the wicked for reward, and to take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.”—(Isaiah v. 20-23.)

This is the Liberty for which Men clamour, laymen and clergymen alike. But this is *not* the Liberty “with which

Christ would make us free;”—for there is no liberty for *men* which is not hedged about by penalties, and bounded by restraint.

The Liberty we want, is liberty to *seek out the Truth; and practise it*. THEN ONLY ARE WE FREE;—free to reckon ourselves of “the household of Faith;”—free to enjoy all the blessings of THE HOLY PRESENCE—“with consciences void of offence towards God and man:” but *not*, (knowing the right) *free to do wrong*; for this is licentiousness and not liberty; leaving us still to the gnawing of conscience, and under “the yoke of sin.”

To make this subject of Common Liberty clear to you—to contrast Liberty with Licentiousness, is the task which, by God’s blessing, I will endeavour to perform to-day.

It is, my friends, a perilous thing to come out into the world and plead for Truth. The man who here in England, should dare to expound it in the market-place would be accused of sedition. He who should preach *anything like it* in the Churches would be anathematised, persecuted, and “deprived.”

It was once a perilous thing to plead for Liberty. It is now almost as perilous (possibly even more so) to ask *to set limits to this Liberty*; to say to it, “Thus far shalt thou go and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”

Some of the *talkers* about Truth perceive these limits, and therefore as sticklers for Liberty, they do not care to make any near acquaintance with Truth. Nay, come to the push, rather than have any limits set to their dear Liberty, they would (some of them) ignore Truth altogether, and

descend to any mean shifts and expedients rather than acknowledge it.

But my friends, if *Preaching* means *Teaching*, whatever becomes of Liberty, the Preacher must take his stand on TRUTH!—clear, positive, definable Truth. Without Truth there is no Liberty. But when *Liberty* WAS NOT, TRUTH WAS! Let us define *Liberty*. It is

Freedom from the tyranny of MIGHT when opposed
to RIGHT.

Here it stops. Truth and Right are barriers, which *rational* Liberty, *used* rationally, never overleaps. *To overpass these is Licentiousness—is tyranny—that same tyranny of Might opposed to Right*, which our natural love of Liberty—our natural need of it—obliges us to do our utmost to put down!

If there were no *Truth* in the world, *it could not be true* that men OUGHT to be free: and if there were no *Right* in the world (and there could be none, if there were no Truth) *it could not be right* that men should SEEK to be free. But admit Truth, and admit Right, to an existence among us, and instantly the clamour for Liberty has a meaning, and becomes a legitimate, a defensible, a definable condition; it means

Freedom from the dominion of Error;

Freedom from the dominion of Wrong.

This is Liberty. It cannot mean any thing more: it cannot mean anything less:

Whatever is *more* than this, is Licentiousness.

Whatever is *less* than this in any man, shews that his spirit (which God made free) is still trammelled by Error, or

trampled on by Wrong. It is the Truth which makes us freemen. "Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."

THE MIGHT WHICH IS OPPOSED TO RIGHT (if submitted to) makes slaves of Men. And FALSEHOOD and ERROR (if submitted to) inevitably do the same. But, the slavery entailed on us by the latter, is by far the more poisonous of the twain.

Brute MIGHT enslaves only the body: while FALSEHOOD and ERROR degrade and hold in abject bondage our divine souls. *This* chains our free spirits to the Earth. Truth breaks these shackles, and the winged soul is free; and the whole limitless heaven is open to us (as are the blue expanse and the tall mountain's summit, to the Eagle;) and there is nothing to shut out from us the clear view of our Duties—nothing to separate us from the love of God.

Whoever does WRONG, *habitually*, or is obliged to *submit* to wrong—is a slave:—if knowingly and willingly, he is a black sordid slave, that is, he is a *Sinner as well as a slave*; and if he continue so, there is no manner of purification under heaven, that can wash his black soul *white*.

Whoever knowingly, and willingly, obliges a fellow creature to submit to wrong, and keeps him ignorant, and helpless, the better to effect his purpose, *is a sinner of a double dye*: and if he go to Church; and pretend to a belief in God; and calls himself a Christian, whilst he remains a heartless despot; better, a thousand times better, that he had never been born. There are such Men, my friends; *and their name is Legion*.

Again. Whoever lives under the dominion of Falsehood,

or obliges others so to live, *is a slave*: if knowingly and willingly,—but I decline to pronounce the Anathemas,—The Preacher's office is to *warn*! I decline to go through the hideous list of wrongs and wrongers, by whom and which so many millions of our fellow creatures are reduced to the condition of slavery—hopeless and irredeemable—both body and soul! The task is an ungracious one! And if any of the Religious systems of the world,—if any of the Codes of Civil Laws of the world—if any of the Social usages current among mankind—were engaged in the work of emancipating these yearly-increasing millions of Enslavers and Enslaved,—if their numbers diminished instead of increased;—if I could see that our sentimental toasts of “Civil and Religious Liberty all over the world,” meant what they profess to mean, and were really doing the work of physical, and intellectual, and moral emancipation throughout the Nations, or even throughout any of the Nations—our own for instance—how gladly would I leave the work even of complaining to these sentimental toasts, and to these established influences, and to the slow and noiseless operations of Time!

Gladly would I avoid the odium! Patiently and gratefully would I enjoy the hope!

I have defined Liberty, to mean

Freedom from the tyranny of *Might* when opposed
to *Right*.

But for the clamour which has shaken England, France, and America during the last fifty years, in favour of *Free thought*, *Free institutions*, *Free churches*, and a *Free press*,—a clamour which gave birth to the sentiment just alluded to

—"Civil and Religious Liberty all over the world," by which hosts of men have pledged themselves to the principle of Liberty, and to its universal extension among mankind; thus admitting, when the clamour began, that the great mass of mankind whilst entitled to the blessings of Freedom, were everywhere enslaved—but for this clamour, and these admissions, I doubt if I might have looked for sympathy, even here, whilst enunciating the terrible fact that, succumbing to the tyranny of "Might opposed to Truth and Right," on a moderate computation, no fewer than *four-fifths* of mankind are *slaves*: that is, wrong is enjoined on them by habit and custom, and superstition, and Law, and *the Truth* is hidden from them, which alone is able to make them free.

I have said, It was *once* a perilous thing to plead for Liberty. But this is a fact with which most of you are as well acquainted as I am; and therefore nothing need be said in the way of proof.

I have also said, It is *now* a perilous thing *to seek to set limits* to Liberty:—a fact not so well known, and therefore will require some explanation.

When men began to clamour for Civil and Religious Liberty, they made common cause with each other, banded together, fought for it, bled for it, and little by little, *obtained it*, and took means to transmit it to their successors.

Such, in the fewest words, may be said to be its history. With the possession of more freedom than they had enjoyed, men naturally grew more *generous*. They felt that Serfdom in any of its forms is degrading; that Liberty is not only a Right but a blessing; and in the true spirit of Humanity

(which is the spirit of the Gospel) they began to claim the same amount of Liberty for all men.

Hence the sentiment, "Civil and Religious Liberty all over the world." For forty or fifty years Christendom has rung with this sentiment. It began amongst the humblest class of political and religious thinkers—among Radicals (as they were nick-named) in politics, and Heretics (as *they* also were nick-named) in Religion.

The glorious cry was loud and long; until now, Orthodoxy echoes it; Parliament echoes it. It is echoed by all ranks of the people from the Conventicle to the Cathedral; from the Hovel to the Throne. And now our fear is (at least *my* fear is) that our Liberty shall run into License, and our very liberality degenerate into oppression, and rivet on *the world's chains and our own anew.*

So enamoured have we become of *Liberty* that the man who would set *limits* to it must expect (if he strive to make himself heard on the subject) to be set down as a madman or a Fool.

"And can we have too much *Liberty*?" you will ask. Certainly not, my dear friends, if you will be contented with Liberty;—if you will be content to have it limited by Right and Truth. Overpass these,—set Right and Truth, and the God of Truth, at nought, and *then* what you *call* Liberty is Licentiousness. You are as free to do wrong as though there were no Right, no Truth, no God, no Religion, in the universe. Come to this, and then with some who should be enlightened leaders, you may deny them all. You may say, "There is no Truth in the Bible out of which to make a creed; there is no Truth in the Nature and Intellect of man out of which to make

a creed; the wisest among us only knows that he knows nothing; therefore, whilst we send out our Missionaries among the people, let us charge them not to pretend to be wiser than the people they go to teach, but let them appeal only to the consciences of these people and not to their hearts."

This, my friends, in other words means that, Whatever is *considered* Right is *Right*; that whatever is *considered* True is *true*; and that *devotedness to whatsoever is considered Right and True* is GOODNESS!

Now, if what *everybody considers* right is *right*; if what everybody *considers* true is *true*; and if an idea of Goodness, or Piety, or Religion, can only be thus arrived at; it is clear, from the confusion and diversity of opinion we see around us, that there is no positive Religion, or Piety, or Goodness, nor any definite standard of Truth and Right, among men; but that every man ought to be at liberty to follow out the dictates of his own will in matters of Morality and Religion, such as we see they do, without any Law greater than their own wills, to curb and restrain them.

This is the very acmé of Liberty, certainly—or rather of *License*: but it is a total denial of real Truth, real Justice, and real Religion, *as well as a virtual dethronement of God!*

If we are in earnest about Religion, therefore, we must be careful not to confound *Liberty* with *License*: because License permits men to "call evil good, and good evil; to put darkness for light, and light for darkness; to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; to be wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight; to be mighty to drink wine; and men of strength to mingle strong drink; to justify the wicked for reward; and to take away the righteousness

of the righteous from them;"—in short to follow all the inclinations of their consciences and their hearts, no matter how ill regulated or ill formed: whilst *true* LIBERTY (which dares not overpass the boundaries of Truth and Right) constrains us to be *just* (even if we cannot be *generous*)—to be *just to all men*, and to yield reverential and loving obedience to the Laws and ordinances of God.

LIBERTY (which is the offspring of Truth) owes and pays willing allegiance to *Truth*, and to Right (which is also the offspring of Truth); and will not—dares not—give any *help* or *countenance* to Falsehood and Wrong.

SCIENCE on the contrary, in the amiable madness of its Liberality, believes in nothing, condemns nothing: there is no Truth, no Falsehood, no Right, no Wrong, nothing which is, certainly, either Bad or Good, *in its vocabulary*; it therefore *believes* in nothing, *condemns* nothing, but *patronises* all. The religion of *such* men (whether they know it or not) is necessarily a sham: there is no reverence in it to GOD; for it virtually denies Him; there is no hope in it for the termination of the wrongs suffered by HUMANITY; for wrongs can have no recognised existence where there is no acknowledged Truth and Right, nor can any *check be given to their excesses*, when all is amiable liberality, patronage and toleration. Its motion is retrograde and not progressive; and were this *License* LIBERTY (which it is not) this retrograde movement would be a large price to be paid by the oppressed masses of our fellow creatures for this indulgence by the Few in an amiable weakness (not to call it by a harsher name) which is certain, if persisted in, to end (as it deserves to end) in disaster and ruin.

This, if I mistake not, is the tendency of much of our own Godless teaching; and of the dangerous character of the Religious liberalism which besets our times.

The utmost scope of LIBERTY is—Freedom from the tyranny of falsehood—Freedom from the tyranny of wrong: and thus defined and limited, we would have it permeate all Humanity, until it has raised and civilised, and refined, and Christianised, and gathered into one vast brotherhood all the nations of the world!

But it is plain there can be no *freedom from wrong* until we know what wrong *is*, and are able to distinguish it from POSITIVE RIGHT; nor can there be any *freedom from Error and Falsehood*, until we are able to separate these from POSITIVE TRUTH: nor without this Knowledge can the swarming millions of human slaves, our brethren and sisters in nature, be emancipated from the mental and bodily bondage to the inhuman usages and superstitions and laws which is everywhere imposed upon them, and which prevent (as far as human tyranny and wrong-doing *can* prevent) their development into women and men.

It is the Truth only that can convert slaves into Freemen: "Ye shall know the Truth," says our divine admonisher, "and the Truth shall make you free."

If the learned Professors in our Colleges,—if the Gamaliels who undertake to teach our Teachers, *have not the Truth, and do not believe in its possible attainment*, in God's name! let them vacate their Professorships, and no longer insult and delude the people who look up to them for instruction in the highest knowledge. Above all, let them cease from their position of authority to denounce the Bible

as incapable of supplying us with any reliable religious Truth, and then (to complete their presumptuous delinquency and our despair) to declare that human Reason is totally inadequate to supply the blank!

How can men (who make it their boast that they know nothing) take upon themselves to declare authoritatively—*that they know even this!* This, however, *we* know, that men who confess they know nothing, cannot be fit to fill places of authority, and ought not to presume to teach.

The case is not an imaginary one: I am betraying no confidence in alluding to it. The Teacher I have in my mind* is his own trumpeter. Some men would *force* their crabbed creeds upon us: HE has no belief to force. The Bible, he tells us, cannot supply us with one: The human understanding cannot supply us with one: Yet, he says Religion must not be neglected: we must send out missionaries; but they must be modest, and know nothing: they must preach unmeaning platitudes to the conscience, and sentimental piety to the heart. As to “the truth” which is “to make men free,” we know of no such truth: we don’t want to know: we are *freer* without it. Admit *Truth*, and we are bound by it: a *creed*, and it enslaves us! No! “Civil and Religious Liberty all the world over” is our motto; we will shackle no man’s conscience; nor shall our own consciences be bound. Social and Civil Laws (being alterable) must be respected; but God’s Laws! we know nothing of them! If distinguished Professors in their excessive love of Freedom, *proclaim this* (and they do!) it would be want

* Professor Martineau.

of charity to mankind not to proclaim against it, and to declare for the Truth taught by Jesus, and sanctioned by the voice of God in our souls; for whatever is true is rational, and it is the truth that is to make us free.

But my friends, notwithstanding this unscriptural—this irrational and thoughtless doctrine of men of thought, *The Bible remains what it was before it was defamed; and the human Intellect also:* and both contain all the elements of moral and religious Truth; all of them bearing the divine impress of duty in their constitution, and so obvious and simple that, though learned Professors fail to perceive them, every earnest seeker, every *honest* man—might find them out. For my own part, I doubt whether (as things are) men whose education, whose very life, has been passed in an atmosphere of Theologic controversies which altogether unfits them for the perception of the simple truth—can be honest. Put on a false scent by early thinkers who not perceiving that in God's works and ways the grandest results are produced by the simplest and minutest means, they expect to find truth a complex and very mysterious thing; something exterior to themselves, hidden perhaps in circles, or triangles, or mystic numbers—and have consequently never thought,—or only thought contemptuously of looking for the simple *germ* of Truth (capable of such complete triumphs and wonderful results!) *within the unread volume of their own minds.*

With this power to guide us there is no difficulty in finding for ourselves a creed, honoring to God, worthy of Jesus, and which must of necessity be responded to by its counterpart in the soul that animates all Humanity.

If those of whom the learned Professor to whom I have alluded is the type, will descend from their profitless contemplations among the mystic volumes of emptiness in which they seem to put their faith, and read any of the penny daily newspapers (which sometimes point a moral to adorn their tale), I venture to say they might pick up hints in abundance, out of which their logical minds might construct a system of moral Truth which would restore their faith in the Bible, and enable them not only to think better of the resources contained within the Human Intellect, but to enunciate to the world a religious creed—a *good God*, in whom to believe—*Truth*, in which to believe—*Justice*, in which to believe—*God's voice within us* (which says, You shall know the Truth, and be faithful to it, know the Right, and do it, know the Wrong, and resist it)—in which to believe—a glorious immortality, in which to believe,—a *never ending existence* (which must be happy or miserable, according as we are faithful or unfaithful to the True and Right), in which to believe—for our souls!—a creed which has no superstition in it—which Reason cannot gainsay—which *must be true* as long as the world lasts; and which must be *necessary*, and *profitable*, and *delight-affording*, to our longing souls as long as Humanity is what it is, and as long as a desire for progress pulsates in the heart of man.

These are the Truths (and they are found in the Gospels!) which are able to make us free,—free to be denizens in God's Kingdom, on Earth and in Heaven; and to be pure from the dominion of Error and Falsehood and all their degrading consequences!

These Truths are thick sown in the Bible;—they are brought to an intelligible focus in the teachings of Jesus; and they are echoed and re-echoed by the consciences within us; but my friends, *not till our consciences have been instructed and awakened to perceive them*; and then, and then only, our consciences become to ourselves a Law: and this teaching, this awakening of men to the Truth, is the sacred duty of all Ministers; and not to preach License in the name of Liberty, instruct us in sentimental piety and to persuade us there is no Truth: for there can be no true Piety, nor true Liberty—which is not the spontaneous *result* of Truth. There can be no Piety, no Religion without Truth! Why—my friends, a paper, not noted for progressive teaching—the daily “Standard,” presented a report of a Social Science Congress, in which the writer says—“The first question which Social Science ought to ask is, What am I? the second, What are my relations to my neighbour? It is from these very simple premises that the whole sphere of duty begins to expand itself into the intelligence of mankind.”

Having thus announced a principle—Self-Knowledge as the basis of Duty—the writer proceeds:—

“The Sophists of Athens could, to be sure, treat with consummate ability and acuteness, that rarely failed, the difficult subjects of Politics and General Science; but were not equal to the task of SELF-ANALYSIS. *This latter principle* it was, which true wisdom, then personified in SOCRATES, endeavoured to realise; and thus it is, that his moral system, although conceived in heathen times, has survived much that was far more ingenious and plausible, if we may judge by the subtlety of its rivals.

"Social progress, then, if honestly undertaken, never dies. Its nature as well as its name implies succession."

Certainly, my friends, Social progress if *honestly* helped forward, never dies. Its *nature* as well as *its* name implies *succession*.

All this—at least the principles which lead to all this—might have been found in the Gospels, and a system of Moral Truth, and a creed (dedicated to Social progress) that could never grow antiquated or untrue might have been reared upon it; and instead of leaving the work to Laymen, Reverend Professors might have been imparting truth to the people;—truth that is able to accelerate their Social progress; elevate and refine them; and, in the sense and language of the Gospel,—*make them free*.

This Social science is the proper work of Ministers of the Gospel—of the disciples of Jesus: but what *hope* is there that it will ever be done by them, if the rising generation of Ministers should come forth pledged *to know nothing, to believe in nothing*; not even to answer the question, What is a Christian? But only primed with a few commonplaces to be addressed to our *unregenerated* "Consciences, and our worldly unawakened hearts!"

My friends, were such a state of things to exist among us, we *must* say—

This is not Freedom from the Tyranny of Falsehood,
 This is not Freedom from the Tyranny of Error,
 This is not Freedom from the Tyranny of Wrong,
 but This *is* Falsehood
 This *is* Error!
 This *is* Wrong!

Therefore, this state of things represents—

not LIBERTY,—

but LICENTIOUSNESS.

Liberty rejoices in the RIGHT, the TRUE, the JUST, the GENEROUS, the GOOD. It *opposes* Error by all gentle, loving, Christian means—*opposes* it; struggles to reform it, to put it down, to root it out; but it *upholds*, and *cherishes*, and *propagates*—by all gentle, loving, Christian means—THE TRUTH! It does not aim to make men ignorantly pious, or sentimentally good; but intellectually pious, beneficent, and *Free!*

It strives to *raise* men—ALL men, without distinction of nation, color, clan, or creed—in their physical and moral *status*; in their social condition; in their intellectual capabilities; in their religious knowledge, faith and hope; to make each “a law to himself,” that we might thereby “loosen the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke,” and (if I might echo the great hope of the Scriptures) “to be PERFECT even as God!”

My dear friends, all this depends on TRUTH;—on our *possession* of the TRUTH; for, not only Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospels, but the voice of Reason in the Soul of Man,—the voice of Reason (which is the voice of God) declares—“Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free!”

May the Spirit of God animate you in its acquisition, and bless you in its propagation among all mankind!

ELECTION AND GRACE.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling:—for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”
—PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS, ch. ii., 12th and 13th verses.

MY FRIENDS,—Awhile ago I attempted to prove to you, on the authority of Scripture—on the authoritative words (authoritative *because rational*) of that large-hearted expounder of christian doctrine—the Philosophic Paul, that Humanity is bounded, and circumscribed by an all-pervading Law of God,—that all *good* of which Humanity is capable, is the result of obedience to this Law; and that *all the moral evils* from which we suffer, are the result of our *disobedience* (whether wilful or ignorant) to this same divine monitor—this hidden, but all-pervading Law.

The words I am about to comment upon—uttered for our edification by the same apostle, only repeat in another form the same great and consolatory fact:—“It is God (in other words, the *spiritual Law* of God) which worketh in us, both to will and to do,” agreeably to “His good pleasure.”

The subject, which (under the guidance of the great apostle—under the authoritative sanction of these rational words of his) we are about to consider is a doctrinal dogma which taints more or less,—the spirit, if not the letter—of

all the Christian Churches which arrogate to themselves the title of orthodox; but which obtrudes itself most conspicuously among that denomination of professing Christians known as Calvinists,—I mean the doctrine of “Election and Grace;”—a doctrine which teaches that God pre-destinated or elected from all eternity a portion of His creatures to an immortality of blessedness; and all the rest to everlasting torment. I am to show you that, if we are to “work out our own salvation”—if there is any truth and certitude in Law,—if Christianity as Jesus taught it, is of any value to mankind—if the spirit of the Gospel is the gift of Heaven and the herald of Love—if God (whom Jesus taught us to address as the All-Father) is infinitely good—*this doctrine cannot be true.*

What is to be the nature of the blessedness destined for the elect the believers in this dogma do not tell us; but the belief is prevalent among them, that *one* part, if not the *principal* part of their *blessedness* will arise from witnessing the torments of the damned,—the mode of which torment seems to have been revealed to those grim-souled Favourites of Heaven, with a distinctness and minute precision that has made Hell and its unending tortures familiar to us all.

With what holy unction these Minions of the Lord describe them!—and with what grim success!

To those who know nothing else of what “Religion” has to teach them, *these* horrors have been taught until “Hell” and the “Devil” and “Damnation” are “familiar in their mouths as household words.”

By such, alas! as well as by their family teachers, the

sacred name of God is (it is to be feared) more frequently invoked to *curse*, than it is to *bless* their fellow-creatures! There is no need, my friends, that I should pain you with these descriptions. Enough that the Calvinist's Hell is a fearful place; and (if men are to carry with them into the other world the common sympathies of men) their Heaven is not more delightful. If these men were not better than their creeds, with what demons would this earth be peopled!

It looks strange—though of course it is *not* strange—that out of this dreary wild fanaticism should have flamed out the spirit of free enquiry which is carrying enlightenment around the world. Persecuted here the “Pilgrim Fathers” planted the banner of Freedom on the soil of America—free institutions—free thought—free enquiry—free speech—yet *this* is the first article of a Calvinist's creed: “That God hath chosen unto eternal glory a certain number of the fallen race of Adam in Christ before the formation of the world, according to His immutable purposes and of His free Grace and Love, without the least foresight of faith, good works, or any condition performed by the creature; and that He was pleased to pass by and ordain to dishonour and wrath the rest of mankind for their sins—to the praise (for so the article terminates) to the praise of His vindictive justice.”

The second article is as follows:—“That though the death of Christ be a most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction, and of infinite value, and abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world,—and though on this ground the Gospel is to be preached to all mankind indiscriminately, yet it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the Cross should

efficaciously redeem all those, *and only those*, who from eternity were elected to salvation and given to him by the Father."

Article the third declares—"That mankind are totally depraved in consequence of the fall of the first man, the sin of whom, as their public head, involved the corruption of all his posterity, and that this corruption extends over the whole soul and renders it unable to turn to God, or to do anything truly good, and exposes it to His righteous displeasure both in this world and in that which is to come."

The fourth article enunciates—"That all whom God hath predestinated unto life, He is pleased, in his appointed time, effectually to call by His word and spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ."

The fifth and last article affirms—"That those whom God hath effectually called and sanctified by His spirit, shall never finally fall away from a state of grace."

They admit that true believers *may* fall partially, and would fall totally and finally, but for the mercy and faithfulness of God who "keepeth the feet of His saints"—that "He who bestoweth the grace of perseverance, bestoweth it by means of reading and hearing the word of God, by meditation and by exhortations, and of threatenings and of promises;" but that "none of these things imply the possibility of a believer's falling from a state of justification."

These, my friends, are the leading features of the Calvinistic doctrine; these are the principal articles of a Calvinist's faith: and I deeply regret to add—there is no shade of what is called orthodoxy, and scarcely any sect of pro-

fessing Christians, which does not hold the same tenets, or tenets the same in substance, though otherwise named and somewhat differently expressed. A capricious and revengeful God; a corrupt and altogether reprobate Humanity—eternal torments our desert—"A scheme of atonement," which we are told, God in His mercy "found out" for the salvation of some of us;—Heaven for these—Perdition for the remainder—and eighteen hundred years after the death of the all-loving Jesus of Nazareth, we have the Christianity which Priests sell, which the Peoples pay for, and which leaves the world as practically ignorant, and, for the most part, as selfish, as vicious, as miserable, as though Jesus and Paul had never lived and laboured to show us "a more excellent way."

I need scarcely point out to you, my reasoning Christian friends, how inconsistent, and therefore how condemnatory of each other the various propositions contained in these articles are. Were it possible to admit what is nowhere found in the Bible—what is contradicted everywhere in Nature—what is, and ever must be, repugnant to the dictates even of our common sense, namely, that from eternity God has elected some of us to blessedness and all the rest to perdition;—let us suppose the further inconsistency of a Bible to instruct us—a crime in our first Parents to degrade and corrupt our nature—a Saviour to atone for our transgressions and redeem us—Faith in this Saviour, to the end that his atonement shall be efficacious. Let us then ask, to what purpose is all this insisted on as a matter of faith, if the weal or the woe of each of us has from all eternity been immutably fixed by a God who cannot change? Goodness cannot mend our condition; badness cannot make it worse;

for nothing can alter the irrevocable decree which has fixed from all eternity our glory or our doom! If this be true,—if we are in the hands of such a God, the Bible, and the Saviour, and the Faith, and every other expedient whether human or divine, are mere useless mockeries, as needless for the Elect, as they are impotent to save the damned.

It comes then to this,—Either these latter articles of a Calvinist's faith, are mere superfluous and senseless parade, or the first article is impiously and blasphemously false.

And yet, these celebrated Articles were drawn up by men, who I verily believe had no intention to blaspheme, or utter words of impiety, but who conceived they were doing the work of the All-holy, ever-righteous God.

The explanation is this—*When men renounce the Guidance of their Reason—the Men are mad.*

It is probably known to many of you that these five Articles, or as they are usually called "The five points" of a Calvinist's creed, were discussed and settled by a Synod convened 250 years ago in the town of Dort. This Synod was composed of ecclesiastical and lay deputies from the united provinces of Holland, and of ecclesiastical deputies from the reformed Churches of England, Switzerland, Bremen, Hesse, and the Palatinate. This Synod sat six months, and at the end of this long incubation these articles were hatched.

As far therefore as human authority and ceremonial circumstance could confer a sanction and give dignity to these articles they were solemnly conferred on them by this grave and reverend assembly: and yet so repulsive are they to Reason and to the common feelings of our nature—so



utterly subversive (to rational and ordinary minds) of that reverence to God they are intended to excite in us, that they fall on the ear more like the artfully-contrived sarcasms of some bold Satirist, than the serious emanation from the minds of the "Christian" sages who in their united wisdom promulgated them, for the comfort and consolation of the Elect, 250 years ago at Dort.

Not to enter further into details than would be convenient and practicable in a brief discourse, let me say that of this dismal doctrine, considered as a whole, this is the pith and substance: Naturally reprobate and base, *all men deserve* damnation; but God (who foresaw that all men *would*, and preordained that all men *should* be thus reprobate and wicked,) "found out" a method by which a few of the sin-fullest (for the more sin the greater the saving grace,) could and should be saved. These are termed His "Elect,"—His "brands snatched from the burning,"—His "freely ransomed saints."

When men renounce their Reason—when they fling it back as a scorned and delusive gift,—fling it back, so to speak, in the face of the Bestower, it is only uttering a truism to say that *all such men are Mad*. And, my friends, rational argument is impossible with such. I therefore decline the task of examining, text by text, the passages from the Holy Book on which these mistaken Zealots support (to their own satisfaction,) a system of Religion (or what they call, and what passes from them for Religion,) which assumes men to be by nature monsters of iniquity, and their Creator and Judge no less a tyrannical Demon in his *Love* than in His *Hate!*

Such a notion of God is dishonouring to Humanity. Such a notion of Humanity is dishonouring to God.

The answer to this libel is written in golden letters among the constellations suspended in the midnight sky—it meets our view in every place of the ever-changing Landscape—it is wafted to us in the odours on the wings of every breeze—it comes to us, in some form of beauty and grandeur, through every sense—it is patent in the beauty-loving longings of every human soul; and this is answer and argument enough.

Not only is such a System of Religion an insult to *Deity*, but the *authoritative teaching* of it (whether Priestly or Parental,) is a fraud on the human race. Indeed, right reason is constrained to look upon *all authoritative teaching*, whether it be truth or falsehood which is sought to be enforced, as *unwise*, to say the least of it; and as tyranny in its worst form when it seeks to trammel and enslave the Intellect which God made free.

“Let every man be persuaded in his own mind” is a maxim even of the zealous and impulsive Paul. Persuasion and not force is, indeed, the spirit which pervades the whole writing of the evangel of Love. Contrary, therefore, to the spirit of Creeds, and the dogmas promulgated by synods and assemblies, the Apostle, who elsewhere admonishes us to “prove all things,”—to take nothing on trust—further admonishes us, in the words we are considering to-day, “with fear and trembling,”—with all care and earnestness to “work out” for ourselves “our own salvation.” How does all Nature admonish us to teach? What method does she herself adopt?—She *woo*es us towards her teachings—mysterious as some of them are and hard to learn—by soft,

low whisperings, by such hues of things as those of which she makes the rainbow, and paints the morning, and tints the evening sky;—by the magic flow of undulating lines filling our souls with ideal forms of beauty; by sounds and sympathies which she breathes from the overflowings of her own great Soul, making *our* souls one with hers. And thus, like dew descending on the parched earth, to give verdure to the grass and herbage, and beauty to the flowers, fall the gentle teachings of Jesus, imparting a new life of love to the sons and daughters of humanity, until their souls grow one with his.

To *convince*, and not to trammel, or enslave, the understanding, is the aim of this divine teacher. He does not dictate and command. He illustrates by analogies and apologues: through the affections he appeals to the reason. He enlightens in order to convince; and the *Soul* (in which a germ of the divine Truth and Goodness is enshrined,)—he leaves it, as God made it, *free*;—free to work out its own salvation, as it will if true to the sacred promptings of its inner Law.

Thus it is, not in putting our trust in mystic formularies which contradict our Reason, but by following the dictates of our love of Truth and Goodness enshrined within, that we are admonished by the Apostle, “with fear and trembling,” each to work out his own salvation: and to do this each of us must be left free to determine on the means placed at our disposal; free to select the way, free to do the work.

You do not, by forcing a Bible into a man's hand, or a catechism into his memory, make a Christian of him. Men are not to be pitchforked into Heaven. To be *dragged* along—even along the “narrow way that leadeth unto life,”

—is not to be *saved*. Every man must be “persuaded in his own mind;” for “*then* it is *God* which worketh in him both to will and to do.” Now if this be *true*, the doctrine of Election and Grace (not to mention “the Atonement” and other cognate doctrines,) must be totally untenable,—essentially and mischievously *false*.

I have thus far dealt with this dreary and repulsive doctrine in a somewhat *ad captandem* fashion: I have appealed to your human feelings and instincts rather than to that God-implemented Faculty of the Soul which is the only *legitimate*, and must be the ultimate, resort of Humanity when the question arises,—between two conflicting statements or opinions, which shall be accepted as the Truth?

In all “*secular*” matters, REASON is our arbiter *always*: and in *Religious* matters, where written Revelation fails us or blinds by too much light, we *Protestants*—if true to our Protestantism,—we *men*—if true to our manhood, have no other resource. And, “if it is *God* who worketh in us to will and to do,” this resource is not only the last to be appealed to, but the *safest* and the *best*. If this grandly-impressive admonition of the Apostle—“Work out your own salvation,” and the deeply philosophical statement which accompanies it, *be true*—if it *be* God’s guiding spirit (enthroned in the form of Law) within us, which enables us in all things “both to will and to do,” the question whether the doctrine of “Election is *tenable and true, or utterly and injuriously false*, may be safely referred to that divine faculty within you which *we* name REASON, but which Paul assures us is *the Voice of God*;—a voice which it has hitherto been the chief business of Governments, and Churches, and



Teachers, and Preachers to *stifle*; but which it must henceforth be the business of a purer Christianity than at present prevails, to render *articulate*, and *distinct*, and *bold*, and *free*.

"Work out your own salvation" is the solemn admonition. Do it "with fear and trembling," this is the caution. But why this caution? Because, "of His own good pleasure, it is *God* who worketh in you both to will and to do."

This you will perceive, my friends, is no other than saying,—

By means of a divinely bestowed power within you—an ever active Law of God—you have the ability to work out your own Salvation, and I solemnly commend to you the life-long task;—beware how you neglect it; beware lest you abuse, or misemploy, or misdirect, this power; for to do so, is to fight against *Law*, against *God*, and to imperil if not to wreck your happiness.

Be it remembered, that in the cosmopolitan spirit of his divine Master (who declared that he came *not to condemn the world*, but that the world through his divine teachings might be saved) this admonition of the greatest of the Apostles was addressed to the little band of Christians at Philippi, *and through them to universal humanity*.

Every unit of the mighty aggregate we call the world *can* work out, *must* work out, *his own* salvation: and in every unit of the mighty aggregate—*there is God!* and *there* must He erect His Heaven! The John Calvinists may *lengthen* the way for him *by keeping him ignorant*, and they may render it very *dismal* for him *by keeping him very poor*; but they cannot walk in and bolt the door, and shut him out. He will find God sometime!

The Calvinistic idea of a *Man* is that he is a reprobate wretch by nature, full of sin and all uncleanness; cursed by his Creator from all eternity; and the loathsome Temple of the Devil. Paul the Apostle of Jesus, says on the contrary, that a *Man* is the holy temple in which resides the ever-quickenings Spirit of Divinity. "Know ye not" says he, in his epistle to the Corinthians, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And to the Philippians, "It is God who worketh in you to will and to do."

If we reflect for a moment on what we know of the matter,—if we appeal to the divine tribunal within us for a decision—we shall see *that Paul is right*; and that the Calvinistic notion is as baseless as the fantastic visions, which sometimes haunt, only to abuse us, in our dreams.

We all *know* (or by reflection we *might* know) that every *act* we perform, and every *wish* that *moves* us, has reference to the *Future*, and never to the absolute *Present* or the *Past*. And this, in God's own way instructs us, that *the Future to us is everything*; and thus, as by a *line of light extending through Eternity*, the IMMORTALITY we instinctively *hope* for is pointed out.

We all *know* (or by reflection we *might* know) that the *one object* of our ceaseless aim is HAPPINESS,—a GOOD in the Future, which we must *strive to realise!* and which (should even Hope desert us) we must still *desire*. Without this motive to action, we should be (if I may employ the solecism) like watches without mainsprings. The watch without its mainspring would not be a watch: and a *Man* without the desire of Happiness for a motive-power would

not be a Man. Experience proves to us, and Revelation was written to tell us, that there can be no *permanent* GOOD, no *real* HAPPINESS, unless the acts and wishes through which we seek it are RIGHT; and that the Right is only attainable through the *true*. Just to the extent that we have realised for ourselves these facts (so all-important in the moral economy of our souls), just to this extent and no further, our desire for TRUTH and RIGHT becomes a part of our desire for HAPPINESS, and our acts and wishes (like the needle to the North) must, thence, and for ever, polarise towards TRUTH and RIGHT. In other words, Man must *love* the Truth, and love the Right, and *seek* them ever, with all the force of his spiritual nature.

Who then, my friends, placed this divine mechanism *within* us?—this simple adjustment of Cause and consequence which impels us “both to will and to do,” and yet leaves us Free Agents, and therefore responsible for our acts? Whose work is it, this mechanism? Whose wonderful arrangement is it, this motive-power which ever points to a Future that has no termination—to the Blessedness we yearn for—and conducts with unerring certainty (if not, in virtue of our Free will, *opposed* by us) *to their attainment?*

There is no other answer than Paul's:—“We are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in us.” “It is God” that is to say, the LAWS of God, which “worketh in us both to will and to do.”

On a subject of such vast importance and so intricate withal, at the risk of being a little tedious, I must endeavor in this brief epitome of the intellectual Laws of our being, to make myself clearly understood.

There ought to be no mystery (at least of Man's making) in Religion: but in the History of all Religious systems we find that the mysteries which formed a part of them have ever been allied with FRAUD. Not to *enlighten*, but to *govern* men, has generally been the end and aim of Sacerdotal teaching. The maxim should be reversed. Enlighten mankind and they will gradually become "a Law unto themselves." This is the great object of *Christianity*; but it has never been the object of *States*: and hence REASON has never been so much as named by the Priesthood except to deprive it of God's paternity, and to Father it on "the Devil." We have become Bible-readers; and things have changed.

We have just seen that, in the divine organisation of the human Mind, the natural office of *Reason* is the discovery of TRUTH; and the natural office of Truth, the attainment of HAPPINESS, which is the universal *desire*—the one blessed object of our being, and consequently the main-spring, or motive-power, of *all activity* (whether virtuous or vicious) among the sons of men.

Reason, therefore (out of respect to its office—to say nothing of its Beneficent Giver), is a faculty to cultivate and honour; and TRUTH and GOODNESS, which tend directly to BLESSEDNESS, are attainments which it is natural we should *love*. Do we love them? "Orthodoxy" says, No! Whence then the homage that eminent virtue (*when there is no mistake about it, for we so love virtue that we will not knowingly pay the homage due to it, to vice*)—Whence then, I say, the homage that eminent Goodness is sure to receive (to the extent that it is believed in) from the universal voice of

humanity? How we detest the names of the NEROS, how we cherish and honor the names of the HOWARDS of our race! Look at our annals and (making due allowance for our prejudices and mistakes) observe how careful we are not to let the names of *our benefactors*—the memory of *Goodmen*—die! Sinners though we are, and, by virtue of our Free-will, constantly doing wrong, for some unworthy object, *knowingly*—do we boast of our wrong-doing?—Are we not—all but the unnaturally hardened, oft convicted sinner, and the Saints in a state of Grace—excepting these—are we not, *all of us, ashamed to own our sin?*

If we are naturally vicious, why should we be ashamed of VICE? And how could we pay instinctive honor to eminent GOODNESS? Orthodoxy—Calvinism, has no answer to these questions without falling back on their old *friend and familiar*, SATAN. They will tell you that the Devil always was an acute Reasoner. But the facts remain; and the doctrine of *natural Depravity* is seen to be baseless: it totters to its fall; and with it must fall all the doctrines that are built upon it. The world will be happier (because *better*) when they are gone!

And now concerning our love of TRUTH. We have seen, from the office it holds in our mental economy, (even if we forget the Giver) we *ought* to love it. Do we? Orthodoxy answers for us in the negative. But how stands the fact? The question is not, Do we never—in virtue of our Free-will, do violence to our conscience, and utter Falsehood? But is it natural to us? Take any individual haphazard as representative of the race; and we shall find that, with the eyes of mankind upon him, whatever may be his temptation

towards untruthfulness, he will always find lying a very difficult task. To lie successfully, his lies must always *look like* Truth. He must learn to suppress the rising blush which is ever ready to betray him; he must do his utmost to silence the "still small voice" within him—which is the voice of God—whispering, "Thou shalt not lie!"—he must become a consummate actor, a finished hypocrite; the trade of lying must be *studied*, and practised as an art—an art the most difficult of accomplishment—an art which the greatest adept therein dare not openly profess;—an art which is hateful to all men—the Liars not excepted; for they detest each other; and, though deceivers, hate to be deceived. Even as the most finished actor does but *mimic* Nature, so does the most consummate Liar but *mimic* Truth. If he slips or falters, or forgets himself, he *fails*: and every such slip, faltering, or forgetfulness, and failure, is a vindication by outraged Nature, of her own Everlasting law—which declares that every man, if faithful to his *Manhood*—*must* love and respect the Truth.

It is not true then, that the "Father of lies" dwells in us; but it is the *God of Truth*, "whose temples we are," "who worketh in us, both to will and to do."

Such then is *Man* by Nature,—with all his sinfulness and black catalogue of crimes! and how large a proportion of these very sins and crimes have been caused aforetime, and are being caused *now*, by the *false* character which a *false* Religion fastens on him, *is known only to God*; but the sum of these unnaturally fostered delinquencies must be very great! *Now*, as aforetime, these Falsehoods fill the world with misery and darken it with crime!

What is the remedy? The Pure Spirit of Christianity! And what is *that*?

What *is* this pure Spirit of Christianity? the very counterpart, my dear Friends, of the *Spirit of God* "who worketh in us both to will and to do" which (even when we are unfaithful to its divine promptings) compels us to detest Falsehood, and love Truth; to detest Oppression, and love Justice; to detest Wrong and to love and reverence Right;—to love and honor Virtue, and hate Vice;—to abominate intellectual and moral Darkness, and to struggle (as we know man can struggle) for intellectual and moral *Light*. The remedy which is to aid our nature to rid itself of its moral maladies must adapt itself thereto!

Such a remedy, my dear friends, is that Christianity which was *lived* and *taught* by its Founder, Jesus, who is worthily called "THE CHRIST."

Leaving the letter of his Gospel to be darkened more and more by the interpretations of the Mystics, let us see whether its spirit be not consonant with our Nature, and thence adapted to its wants.

What then is Christianity? With my hand on the Gospels I answer,—Christianity is the worship of one God in Spirit and in Truth: doing unto all men as we would that all men should do unto us: walking in the ways of Jesus: living his life: feeding the multitude with the bread of eternal life: healing the sick: giving sight to the blind—sight to those who have eyes, but see not; raising the dead by infusing a spirit into dead Materialism: overcoming evil by good: abasing Mammon: driving the Money-Changers from the temple: blessing little children:

instructing all men: honoring all men: humanizing the Nations: converting the whole earth into a human brotherhood: sacrificing if it must be so, every earthly comfort for the attainment of these objects: turning not aside at the frowns of power; heeding not the scorner's scorn; and if need be, dying the death of our great Exemplar, and shedding our heart's blood for the emancipation from Ignorance and Error, of a hitherto misguided world.

Read the Epistles and the Gospels, my dear Friends,—not as word-critics,—not in the spirit of Sectarian and Calvinistic exclusiveness; but with the large-hearted liberality of “Men and Brethren” who believe in the Fatherly affection of an All-beneficent God,—read them, and study them, and judge for yourselves, whether Christianity be not what I have attempted to describe it—*A Religion of Action*—whose sympathies are boundless; and the sphere of its operations co-extensive with Humanity, and as wide as the span of the world.

Such a Religion involves the necessity of a God who *created* this world (and all that therein is) in *perfect wisdom*, and who *governs* it in perfect *Love*.

You have now my reasons for the faith that is within me concerning the doctrines of “Election and Grace.” In deciding against this frantic doctrine, you have all Nature with you; You have the Divine instincts of all Humanity with you; You have Reason with you; You have the spirit of Jesus with you; And you have the apostolic authority of the deeply-reasoning and philosophic Paul.—With the calmness that becomes Rational beings who, either for weal or woe, are on the threshold of *Reality*, you will weigh,

and consider and determine for yourselves, whether to confide in a system which reduces you to automatons in Nature, created in "malice aforethought," to be the helpless, hopeless victims of a vindictive Tyrant;—or in a system which gives meaning and dignity to the title you bear of *Men*,—which places you in the scale of being, "a little lower than the Angels," and which entitles you by the affinity of a common nature, to deem yourselves Sons and Daughters of an *All-beneficent God*.

If you decide on the former, you need not concern yourself about Religion: your lot is cast: you have only to await, with what complacency you can, what time alone can disclose to you—your "call" to some grim incomprehensible "glory;" or at the nod of dread Omnipotence, to pass with the crowd—*onward, hellward*, to your doom.

But, if you decide on the *latter*, you decide to enter on a career of spiritual and moral progress—glorious beyond what imagination can paint it—which demands of you, that you shall be *men indeed*; "*doers* of the word, and not *hearers only* deceiving your own selves;" for be assured of this,—the UNJUST; the UNTRUTHFUL; the DOERS of INIQUITY; the UNRIGHTEOUS OPPRESSORS OF MEN, the PRETENDERS TO GODLINESS; "shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven." How *can* they? The thing is impossible! Truth is Heaven. Goodness is Heaven.

The deceived wanderers, headstrong in the irrational use of their Freewill, resisters of the inward light,—these wanderers (for eternity is long, and God is Love)—these wanderers must come back to righteousness; they must feel its Life-giving warmth within them; then Happiness—a new born

blessedness— is theirs, and Heaven,—the Heaven they so long had wandered from—is gained!

No! Falsehood, nor Hypocrisy, nor Superstition, nor Villany, nor *any Vice*, can enter Heaven!

The prize is glorious; and (against all the lusts of the flesh and the low suggestions of selfishness) it must be manfully struggled for, and fairly won!—In other words, my dear friends,—and they are the words of the Apostle Paul—We must “Work out our own Salvation.”

And now to that God I commend you “Who worketh in you, both to will and to do,” and to Him be all gratitude and glory for ever!

TIME.

“And the Angel whom I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hands to Heaven and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever; who created Heaven and the things that therein are, and the Earth and the things that therein are, and the Sea and the things which are therein—That there should be Time no longer.”—REV. ch. x., 5th and 6th verses.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, what is Time? There is an eternity behind us which had no beginning. There is an eternity before us which can never end. The space between is Time. It is a mathematical point. It is not: yet it is. But this is being too curious—too uselessly exact. Better that we take a more human view of it, and so liken it to a Brook that sometimes in the sunshine, and sometimes in the shade, runs and leaps sportively and laughingly, like a Child, playing with the pebbles and dallying with the flowers until it reaches the River, and then, pursuing its way more sedately, glides unceasingly onwards until it mingles with the everlasting Sea.

The period of our sojourn in this world—that, to us, is Time.—“The number of a man’s days,” says the Son of Sirach, “at the most are a hundred years.”

The same Son of Sirach tells us also, in his book called

"Ecclesiasticus," which divines pronounce apocryphal, that "When a man hath *done*, then he beginneth." And this, in every sense, is true: and truest in the highest: for then "Mortality puts on Immortality;" and all is changed. The elements of our being are then changed of themselves, by a new arrangement, into a loftier harmony; like as in an Organ or a many-stringed Harp, the notes by a new arrangement, change the name, and significance of the melody, yet are always the same notes. When the earthly jangle endeth, then beginneth the harmonious anthem of Eternity: but in Time, and in Eternity, the Singer is the same: and his contribution to the general harmony will depend upon the *use* he has made of Time.

It is well that the Angel of the Apocalypse should sometimes thunder in our ears, that the period cometh to each of us, stealthily, like a thief in the night, when "Time shall be no longer."

It is our sojourn in this world that constitutes what we all of us understand by *Time*.—When we are Children how long it seems ere we shall be full-grown Men!

Throughout life (with *many* of us) how heavily on our hands, hangs Time!—with *all* of us, when it passes not pleasantly, how tardily it limps along! and, how willingly we pay the Syren who has the gift to *rob* us of this—our richest heritage! Yet, when we think, as we sometimes do, to what grand uses Wisdom could apply it, of the noble works we might *do*, and the Greatness we might *attain* to, by its aid, then our thought is "Oh, that we had time!"

Let us pause here, whilst we consider how much of the Time available to these higher uses is, by many of us, in



this way dissipated, squandered, lost!—Could the least prodigal of us reckon up the hours and half-hours of every-day which we barter for AMUSEMENTS (that are neither moral nor immoral in themselves)—for PLEASURES merely sensual (which tested by the strictest moral standard are neither good nor bad)—for PASTIMES (innocent enough, *essentially*) which rob no one but ourselves,—could we compute these hours and half-hours, year by year, who knows how large a portion of our heritage even the least extravagant amongst us would be found to have dissipated in fifty or sixty years! Had we the account before our eyes (and were there even no record of immorality mixed up in the statement) we should, I think, stand amazed and confounded at the amount we had paid for profitless pleasures, and for the rainbow-tinted wings we had thus wantonly added to the swift feet of Time! And if this would be the regretful feeling of the *least* improvident, how awful the reckoning when presented, (and sooner, or later, it must be presented) to those whose squanderings have been incessant, and much thereof for those degrading pleasures, which corrupt and debase others, and entail sin, and crime, and misery, and every variety of wretchedness on the world!

To all youthful readers who have never seriously thought of these things, I would affectionately address this beautiful admonition of one who has long since passed his audit—

My dear young friend, "*arrest the present moments*;
For be assured they all are arrant tell-tales;
And though their flight be silent, and their path trackless
As the winged courier of the air,

They post to Heaven and there record thy folly—
Because, though stationed on the important watch,
Thou, like a sleeping, faithless sentinel,
Didst let them pass unnoticed, unimproved,
And know, for that thou slumberest on the guard,
Thou shalt be made to answer at the bar
For every fugitive; and when thou thus
Shall stand impleaded at the high tribunal
Of hood-winked justice, who shall tell *thy* audit?
Then stay the present instant; question it;
Imprint the marks of wisdom on its wings;
'Tis of more worth than Kingdoms! far more precious
Than all the crimson treasures of Life's fountain!
Oh! let it not elude thy grasp, but like
The good old Patriarch upon record,—
Hold the fleet Angel fast until he bless thee!"

There are moments when it seems amazing how royally we pay for that perverted genius which robs us of our Time! What multitudes of mortals live merely to amuse the rest! *Pastime* has become a necessity. We look for it as we look for food. Like Food, too, the coarsest and dirtiest will suffice, where the daintier and more delicate cannot be obtained. *Have* it we must. We pine, or mope, or grow lunatic, or die, unless we get it. Excitement we must have, whether we obtain it at the Opera-house, the Casino, the Coal-hole, or the Church. We are all Critics, too, in these matters. No one *prefers* what he deems *mediocrity* in any thing. By a law of our nature, we are compelled to *prefer*, in every thing *that which we deem to be the best*. That our preference will be *right* depends on Taste—and our Taste, is the result of our education. Our judgment is formed, not on the *matter*, nor the *means*, but in reference

only to the *result*; hence we are as likely to bestow the palm *on the farce at the Adelphi*, as on that at *St. George's*, or *St. Paul's*.

All these things are patent to the eyes and consciousness of us all. I have not mentioned them to *pain you*, nor to *please myself*, but simply to draw Truth, and Wisdom, and Instruction out of them, if we can. I sigh that such things are; and that we are all—*preachers as well as hearers*—more or less the victims of them; but I am not going to pour out the vials of self-righteous wrath against the offenders, who for the most part, are but following out two very powerful instincts of their nature—the *desire for what is pleasure giving*, and the *desire for what is great and good*. Every one aims at the pleasurable: he cannot help it. Whatever *promotes* this pleasure seems to him *good*. Whatever brings him the *most* of it, or *is the most permanent*, seems to him *the best*. The *Priest* and the *Philosopher* bow to this Law as obediently as the *pleasure-seeker* in the dens of infamy, or the *untutored Savage in the wilds*. We are *Pleasure-seekers* all; and, as far as we know good from evil, we are compelled to eschew the evil and prefer the good.

EVIL, *to be loved*, must always (for the time) seem GOOD: and GOOD, *to be hated*, must always (for the time) seem *evil*. If we do not know the counterfeit, which passes current here on earth, from the true coin minted in Heaven, it is because we have been taught from our cradles to secure the good things of *this world*, *at all events*, and to let those of the next world (if there *be a next*) take care of themselves.

It is all a matter of teaching,—of knowledge—a perception of the right *end* towards which *this instinctive*

craving of our souls for the pleasurable ought to be directed. We are taught that Goodness has nothing to do with the *Intellect*. It is time for us to be disabused of this idea—*pernicious as it is false*.

Unreasoning ignorance cannot sin—the *Horse*, therefore, is never convicted of crime. Neither can unreasoning ignorance be the author of a virtuous or a moral act; or the *Elephant* might be as moral, as religious, as *we*. *In proportion as we have knowledge*, we are moral agents, and can do right or wrong. *Goodness*, as well as *badness*; *virtue* as well as *villany*, is *the product of the intellect*,—in other words, it is the Soul's intellectual gatherings, transmuted by *action* into virtue, or into vice, and then it takes the name of the virtue or the vice enacted. When the end to which it is directed is the elucidation of the nature and constitution of physical things, it takes the name of *Science*: when to the determination of the laws of numbers, it takes the name of *Mathematics*: when to the explanation of the laws of quantity, magnitudes, and form, it takes the name of *Geometry*: when to the laws of the spiritual soul, it takes the name of *Metaphysics*: when the end sought is the material economy of a State, and the government of a People, it becomes *Politics*: when, under the pretence of good Government, the end sought is the *abjectness of the Many* and the *aggrandisement of the Few*, it *deserves* the name of *Villany*, and *obtains* this name when the pretence is seen through, and the villany is unmasked: when between man and man, the end to which our knowledge is directed is to take advantage of our neighbour's poverty, or ignorance, or weakness, or trustfulness,—to do him

wrong, it is then called, *by all but the doer of the baseness*, VICE OR IMMORALITY: when, on the contrary, it *seeks* the wellbeing and happiness of our fellows, this product of our intellectual soul becomes (in Christian language) LOVE. Without the knowledge, nothing of this is possible; *with it*, all, all, and forever *all!*

THAT *knowledge* is the HIGHEST WISDOM which is, in all things, directed to *the end whence come our purest pleasures and our highest good*. And to these God has directed us by the ceaseless operation of the instincts whose office in the soul's economy we have been tracing to their *misdirected results*. What their *true office* is—what *is* that *highest wisdom which conducts to the highest good*, we shall get a glimpse of as we proceed.

It will be seen, then, if I have been so fortunate as to have made myself understood—that it is natural for us to desire what is *pleasant*: it is natural to us to desire what is *great and good*.

And out of these two facts we deduce an *inference*; we perceive that, because it is *natural* to us to desire what is pleasant, as well as what is great and good, He who implanted these desires must have designed that our purest and highest pleasure should flow out of the pursuit and attainment of our purest and highest good.

Experience has taught men that it is so. Reason declares it (independently of experience), when our reasoning is based on a belief in the infinite Wisdom and the infinite Goodness of God: and Revelation speaks trumpet-tongued, to the same effect. Solomon declares with all the eloquence of real inspiration,—“Happy is the

man that findeth Wisdom, and the man that getteth Understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver; and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand, riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." (Proverbs, ch. iii.)

But although Revelation concurs with Reason (which is also Revelation) in declaring that the proper use of Time is in the attainment of true Wisdom; and that the practice of Goodness (which is the result of true Wisdom) is the true and only way to "pleasantness and peace," it is *Experience* only, that can convince the young and worldly-minded of the fact. Belief is not enough: they must have the knowledge. Then seeing how perseveringly mankind in general seek pleasure through the devious ways of sinfulness and evil-doing instead of through Goodness; it must be owned that the knowledge of this fact has hitherto made but little progress in the world. And there must be a reason for this. There might be many reasons, but assuredly this is one.—Instead of teaching Men and Children that the highest wisdom, and the purest Godliness, are pleasant, and delightful things; and exemplifying by their *lives*, and *looks*, and *actions*, that they find them so,—the Ministers and Teachers of Religion, almost everywhere, make Religion a *penance*; and Godliness, the gloomiest and least inviting by-way to a doubtful Heaven, and a cheerless grave! And then, they wonder that the irreligious majority of the people cannot be got to church, and that the professing minority are so little the

better for going thither!—They are astonished that the “ungodly, reasoning with themselves, but not aright”—should say—“Our life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy: neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave. For we are born at all adventure; and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been: the breath in our nostrils is as smoke, and a little spark in the moving of our hearts; which, being extinguished, our body shall be turned into ashes, and our spirit shall vanish as the soft air. And our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall have our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and be dispersed as a mist that is driven away with the beams of the morning sun, and overcome with the noon-day heat thereof. Come on, therefore; let us enjoy the good things that are present: let us fill ourselves with costly wine, and let no flower of the Spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rose-buds before they are withered. Let none of us go without his share of voluptuousness: let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place: for this is our portion, and our lot is this. Let us oppress the poor righteous man: let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the grey hairs of the aged. Let our *Strength* be our law of Justice; for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Therefore let us lay in wait for the righteous, because he is not of our turn, and is clean contrary to our doings: he upbraideth us with our offending his law, and objecteth (to our infamy) the transgressings of our Education. He *professeth* to have the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the child of the Lord. He is made to reprove our

thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold ; for his life is not like other men's: his ways are of another fashion."

In this wise, according to Solomon, men reasoned against Religion under the sacrificial, and awe-inspiring system of the Jews. And in this way (and no wonder) they reason *now*, under a system *called* Christian, and intended by its author to be delight-affording to mankind, but which Superstition and Priest-craft have rendered, in spirit, quite as arbitrary, and repulsive as Judaism ; and in the letter, even more subversive of all religious feeling, because more heathenish, irrational, and untrue.

I must remind you here, my friends, that Jesus, whom we call Christ, is not the author or inventor of any *system* of religion. The system which is dignified by his name is none of his. This system of *rites*, and *forms*, and creeds, and sacraments, was invented by his Disciples and successors (near and remote) in *honor* of him—and is so far *good*; and for the purpose of Christian Fellowship—which, again, is so far good ; but the observance of these Sacraments, and forms, and rites, and Creeds, *is in no respect Religion*, although it has come to be considered such. Religion—I mean Christ's Religion,—is a very different thing. To put these rites, in the place of Religion, is something very like Idolatry: *it is Superstition*. It is taking the shadow, for the substance of Religion. It is like the senseless cry we sometimes hear, of "The Bible ; the whole Bible ; and nothing but the Bible !" by men who pick, each what he pleases, out of the Bible, and leaves the rest ; and what he takes, moreover, he twists into any meaning that suits him best ; and thus, at his own good pleasure perverts this Bible—adds—omits—

distorts—and alters, and well knows that everybody else is doing the same ;—yet, still he cries “ The Bible ; the whole Bible ; and nothing but the Bible ! ”

Equally absurd it is to institute Sacraments, and ceremonies, and symbolic forms of public worship ; and to call the observance of them, Christ's religion.

If we separate for a moment what in the mind of Jesus, seems never to have been separated—the two grand elements of his Religion—the purely religious portion (which is love of God) from the purely Moral portion, (which is love of our Neighbour) then, by “ Religion ” is meant—SUITABLE SERVICE PRESENTED BY MEN TO GOD.

But the idea of Jesus was that, Love of our neighbour *made part of this* SUITABLE SERVICE—the part, moreover, most acceptable to the God of Love, and therefore least to be dispensed with by men calling themselves Religious.

But Jesus never prescribed any *form* by which the service should be rendered. He was found daily in the Temple, but he did not go there to *worship* : he went there to *teach*. In the public Temple (then, as now, set apart for the public worship of God) he taught the people what Religion *is*—and *how* to be Religious. The Temple therefore, that is, the Church, or the Meeting House, is not the place in which to *do* our religion ; but the place in which to *learn* (or to be reminded) *what Religion is* ; and in which to learn (or to be reminded) *when, and where, and how, to be religious*.

Consider for a moment what Religion *is*, as Christ taught it, and you will see that it is not a thing for public show at particular times, and in particular places ; but for *practice*, publicly, and privately, at all times, and in all places. *This*

is his first injunction as the basis of a religious life.—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, and with *all thy soul*, and with *all thy mind*, and with *all thy strength*: and Him only shalt thou serve.” And the second is like unto it—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thyself.” For this, he declared, is the *whole Law*—which the Jews had frittered down into mere ceremonials—as well as the intention of the teaching of the Prophets—which the Jews had, in practice, almost entirely disregarded.

It will be seen therefore, at a glance, that this Religion, cannot be “cribbed, cabined, and confined,” within four walls;—that it is not an ordinance to be observed at certain *times*, and at stated *intervals*; but that the Duty implied therein, is incessant; that the Temple of God is the *Soul* of man;—and that *Time*—the period between the two Eternities—is the space allotted us for its performance.

When Jesus *prayed to the Father*, he went apart to pray,—in the mountain,—into the Garden of Gethsemane—or, when none but his God was near him—on the Cross.

These our meetings, my dear friends, are for the promotion of Christian fellowship, and for the learning of our Christian duties—for instruction among ourselves in the all-important matter of Religion; and at such times, “if any would be *great* among you, let him *minister*:” and if any would be *honorable* among you, let him be your *servant*.

Whoever, therefore, would confine Christianity to creeds; or Religion, to the observance of rites and ceremonies, take the shadow for the substance, and egregiously deceive themselves. Such Religion, Jesus neither taught nor practised. It has been instituted by others: it is none of *his*.

Here I might remind you of what a whole sermon would not enable me to fully illustrate—how incomparably great and good a Being this Jesus was. Enough for to-day, that I give you the sum of it. He *revealed God to us as He is*—the infinitely Great—the infinitely Good—the all-loving *Father* of Humanity.

For an empty, awe-inspiring *Name*, he gave us a comprehensible—an ever-adorable *Reality*—a FATHER to *trust in*—to *seek after*—and to *love*. He made Religion *possible*, by making it *intelligible*, and *rational*: he made Religion *loveable*, by making it *pleasurable*, *beautiful*: he solved this problem for us—That our highest *pleasure*, our greatest *happiness*, must flow out of *that Duty*, the performance of which *is our highest Good*. He taught us, moreover, that *all men are brethren*—equal before God—and that the *neighbourhood* of a *man* is not confined to the limits of the village in which he resides, but extends over the entire world.

I have heard it said—Take away the “Divinity” from Jesus and he is nothing. I have also heard it said—Take away the power of performing miracles from Jesus, and you reduce him to a myth! Is Plato a myth? Yet Plato never wrought a miracle. Was Solomon nothing? And yet no one ever dreamed that Solomon was a God.

But what, let me ask you, has been accomplished by all the Solomons, and Solons, and Platos, that ever lived, in comparison with what was accomplished for universal Humanity, by “the man Jesus,” whom, because of what he has done for us, we call *the divinely anointed*—the *Christ*—the *Saviour*—the *best beloved Son of God*?

My friends, do not let us be deceived by words. God is

too great in Omnipotence to be a Christ. Man is too poor in examples of Goodness to spare the greatest name from its annals.

Let not superstitious Credulity rob an elder brother of the love and honor due to him ; neither let it rob ourselves of the honor of a kindred nature, and a blood-relationship to the Great Teacher—whose character and capabilities were purely *human*, though his life was beautiful and blameless, and his mission essentially divine.

Besides, my friends, If Jesus *matriculated in Heaven*, well might men, however highly gifted, despair of reaching (and therefore never attempt to reach) the altitude of his presumed perfection ; but, *if he took his degrees as a Teacher in a poor home in Bethlehem*, the humblest among us—if strong in effort—might, without impiety, indulge, and why not without a miracle, realise? this soul-exalting, heaven-imparting, *hope*.

Incalculable has been the influence of this great Teacher on the destinies of mankind. But I believe that what has been accomplished, is as nothing to that which is *accomplishable*, in human elevation and enlightenment, when, to the *profession*, we add the *practice*, of this humanising, and beautiful, and elevating Religion, which was first *revealed* by the *Teaching*, and proved *possible* by the *example* of Christ. We must, however, first root up the rank weeds of heathenism and superstition which encumber it, and *adopt it in its primitive simplicity—or this cannot be!*

The ceremonials, and creed-teachings, and salvation-schemes, and the other inventions and pretences, which are everywhere imposed on men, as the Religion of Jesus, are

deluding the ignorant, disgusting the better-informed, and doing their utmost to make hypocrites and atheists of us all. For in the beautiful language of our great Teacher, "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles."—"A *good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit*: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth *good fruit*." Righteousness and holiness cannot be the product of ignorance and lies. Crime is the natural product of Injustice. If we plough *Imposture* into the infant mind of the community, we might be certain of a *crop of Vice*. If we plant absurdity, we shall gather its natural fruits—*indifference, and doubt*. If we sow *Superstition*, we shall reap *Sin*. And where we *neither plough nor sow*—the weeds of wickedness will be abundant.

Look round the world, my dear friends, and you will see that *it is so*: read Christ's Sermon on the mount, and it will tell you *why*. And mark its termination:—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth* them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock:—and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.—And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and *doeth them not*, shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand:—and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell: and great was the fall thereof."

The "Christianity" of Christendom is built on Sand. If it were not everywhere the unnatural Co-partner with Civil Governments—which are based on the perverted intelligence of the *Few*, and the credulity and the ignorance of the *Many*

—on *Law*, and not on *Love*—if it were not in the most intimate alliance with the Saintly-looking *Political Injustice* of the world,—it could not stand before the Intelligence of Europe (perverted though it is) a single day.

It is *now* exactly as it was eighteen hundred years ago—it is against the lordly league of “Priests and Rulers” that the Religion of Jesus has to fight. We have still to beware of those false teachers “who come to us in sheep’s clothing,” but who, *inwardly*, are ravening wolves.”

I speak not of *the deceived multitude of professing Christians*, who, as far as they are *sincere* in the belief they have been bred in, are worthy of our esteem and love. I SPEAK OF THE *clique canonical* BY WHOM THEY ARE DECEIVED—of the “greedy dogs,” alluded to by Isaiah, “which can never have enough ;” of the “Shepherds that cannot understand ;” of those who “look to their own way, every one for his own gain, from his own quarter.”

My friends, do not mistake my motive in saying these harsh things ; do not too hastily impeach my *Charity*.—As to the latter,—there is no charity in remaining silent about public wrong ;—and as to the former,—it is out of no spirit of self-righteous Pride that I attack the errors, by which I believe that you and I, and all men, are defrauded.

This world might be a Paradise for Angels to abide in, instead of what it is to hundreds of millions, of our fellow-mortals,—a place of torture and needless suffering—a workshop of unrequited toil—a vale of tears—a dreary, joyless, passage to the grave !

Time passes not pleasantly with these : nor can *the pros-*

pect of Eternity (unless it could bring annihilation with it) be anything inviting.

If there be any here, who think these things are taking place under the influence of the Religion of Jesus, I wish—and it is my duty—to undeceive them. There cannot be a greater delusion. No, my dear friends, the God of his religion is—the *all-loving Father*—into whose benignant presence *all* of us are invited to come—a God who is no respecter of persons, a God who hath made of the same blood, and destined for the same glory, all the nations of the earth, and who requireth only of all His children—that they “cease to do evil, and learn to do well,”—that they live in obedience to His blessing-giving Laws, and strive to love each other as He loveth us,—this is the God of the Religion of Jesus. But mark the difference,—the God of Romish Christianity is a mere cypher—He has transferred everything to the POPE,; who is “hand and glove” with the Virgin and the Saints and these settle everything between them, for the “faithful” of the Catholic Church.

Again—the God of Protestant canonical Christianity is sometimes a shadowy Being too distant to be known, and too terrible to be loved; and at other times, a Being so infirm of purpose that he is moulded to the requirements of the Episcopacy by our Prayers. The God of Calvinism is also a God of terrors to all but the Elect. Whilst the God of Methodism, and “Low Church” is all but a non-entity: it is the “Lord Jesus,” the “dear Jesus,” who alone can save.—And as for *Neighbours* on whom to lavish their love, neither the Methodist, nor the Calvinist, nor the Church-of-Englandist, nor the Romanist, *have any* out of the pale of

their respective communions ; or more correctly speaking, "Neighbours" are altogether unknown to Creeds.

But men are *naturally* better than their Creeds ; and as Science and general intelligence diffuse their benignant light among us, we are out-growing them every day.

Out of these cold, dogmatic *formulas*, which war against every natural feeling of the human mind ; which, instead of directing our instinctive love of what is pleasant and delight-affording to high and holy ends, seek to crucify and exterminate it from the human breast ;—out of these cold rigorous, dogmatic Formulas, you might wring *penances*, (and we must honor those really pious souls from whom they wring them!) and out of them you may wring *pious-looking pretences* ; but out of them, you cannot wring *Religion*.

Think of these things, my friends, realise in your own minds the *banefulness* of these inventions, and you will cease to wonder that, under their chilling and unnatural influence, the world is a *godless* world—a world of *wickedness*, and *suffering*, and *slavery*, and *tears*.

The beauty of the Religion of Jesus is, that it is a Religion in harmony with human nature. It gently leads us by the holy influences of kindness, sympathy, and love, to a ceaseless recognition and grateful worship of *the God of Love*. It obliges us to feel, that a life devoted to *this* Religion (beautiful as it is benignant!) is the *true wisdom*—whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace.

We have but to realise this great Truth, and we need no frigid homilies to prove to us what is the rational use, and the most approved method of employing, *Time*.

When Religion is naturally a *pleasure* to us,—when we see



God in the shade and in the sunshine ; in the green earth ; and in the starry heavens ; in the fields and at our firesides ; when we know that He is always about us, in our gayest and in our saddest moods,—and when we have learned to perceive a *Neighbour* in *every* human being whose necessities claim our sympathy—a Brother in every erring wreck of humanity—then will earth be a Heaven to us ; and we shall be worthy to call ourselves disciples of him who taught us that *God is love*, and who ante-dated, by nineteen centuries, the humanising knowledge, that Science is beginning to unfold to us—in *his all-comprehending Sermon on the Mount*.

My dear friends, though in the faulty and false system under which we at present live, much of our *time* must be employed—contrary to Christ's teaching—in taking “thought for the morrow,” and in providing for “what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed,”—though (until men shall have worked out for themselves the promised Millennium) these things must be, let us strive, notwithstanding the adverse circumstances which surround us, to follow the benign teaching of Jesus, and to be worthy of his Love ; and then we shall hear only a summons to a higher, and a holier, and a happier Heaven, in the warning voice that tells us that

“There shall be *Time* no longer.”

SIN.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their Sin."—JOHN xv. chap., 22 verse.

THESE words of the Evangelist fitly introduce the subject. But for Sin there would be little need of the Preacher. Sin is at once our Glory and our Shame: our GLORY, because it is the necessary accompaniment of the Free-will and other intellectual conditions of the most highly endowed order of beings of which we have any certain knowledge—I allude, of course, to Man: and our SHAME, in as much as its wide-spread influence almost shuts us out from communion with God, and our highest good; blurs with deformity the beauty of creation; and converts the blessings of our benevolent Creator into curses too direful for minds not quite dead to pity, to contemplate without the profoundest humiliation, and the deepest pain.

I approach the theme, hacknied as it is, with trepidation. It is the most awful subject for a conscientious man to deal with; and yet it is the very last that a conscientious man should shrink from, or avoid. There is no topic so familiar both to Preacher and People; and none, I believe, about

which there is so much misconception, mystification, and error; and yet, assuredly, there cannot be a subject concerning which it is more important that there should be no misapprehension or mistake. Feeling this, I have been emboldened to attempt its elucidation; and, armed with the lucid words of Jesus, which go straight to the root of the matter, I feel a confidence which almost amounts to a certainty that I shall not fail.

The words of Jesus are clear, consequently they do not require any skill in the way of interpretation; but as I may have to refer to other passages of Scripture which are not so intelligible, let me say here, and once for all, that the Revelation contained in the Bible, like that pictured on the Sky, and written on the rocks, and interwoven in the nature of all material things, *can be no Revelation to us*, until its language speaks clearly and unmistakeably to our apprehensions, and finds a responsive echo in our souls.

There are many anomalies and contradictions in the Bible, or at least *seeming* contradictions. There is no candid *student* of the Bible but admits this; and no *worshipper* of the Bible but will tell you that this is one of the best proofs of its Divinity,—that God's ways are not man's ways: and that the defect is in us, and not in the book.

This may all be true; but it does not reconcile the contradictions, or remove the difficulty.

If a man should say in the first page of his book,—“At noon, on the third of September, eighteen hundred and fifty, I heard A. B. preach a sermon in Westminster Abbey;” and then at the tenth page say, “At noon on the third day of

September, eighteen hundred and fifty, I heard A. B. preach a sermon in St. Peter's at Rome," these two statements would contradict each other, and detecting the contradiction, we should say, "One of these statements may be true, but both cannot be true: if the writer was at Westminster at the time mentioned, he could not have been in Rome." We should say, "This is a mistake of the writer, or a mistake of the printer, or a falsehood purposely inserted by some one, with a view to confuse or deceive."

In like manner, when one passage of Scripture contradicts other passages, our only way is to believe the most probable, and pass over the others as mistakes.

But we are told by the Bible worshipper, that every word of Scripture must be true. Without attempting to gainsay this, I will only remark that whatever is contradictory, or so obscure as to convey no meaning, or only a doubtful one to our minds, *to us* every such passage fails in all the essentials of a Revelation. To others, these obscure passages may be as clear as daylight; or, ages hence, when all that now seems dark in them shall have been elucidated by Science (which is the key to all the mysterious revelations of God) simple-minded, and unlettered men, may then perceive a meaning in them, which the wisest of us can only guess at now. To that time we must leave them. These passages were not written for us. We must content ourselves with what is clear, and unmistakeable, and uncontradictory; for these alone can, to us, be a Revelation of the will of God. All such portions of the sacred book reveal something we understand; something we have a warrant within us, or in the world around us, for believing; some-

thing which brings rational conviction, and moral health, and peace, and joy, and holiest consolation to our souls.

These we accept with thankfulness; the others we leave with all becoming reverence and humility,—and regret. And be assured of this, we shall never be condemned by the All-righteous Judge for not believing in occurrences which contradict every man's experience, and our own knowledge.

They might, for aught we know, be true; but, if to us they seem untrue, we Sin—and it is one of the worst of Sins—to make a false profession of belief in them. Of all sins, that of *Hypocrisy* is the most contemptible, and of the *kind* that is the least pardonable, for the Hypocrite *knows* that he dissembles, and, before the tribunal of his own conscience, will stand convicted of inexcusable Sin. *Jesus*, the gentlest being that ever bore the form of humanity, was sometimes severe, even to harshness, in his denunciations; and certainly the very harshest of these denunciations were levelled at the Hypocrites. I proceed now to the more immediate consideration of our text, and the inferences logically deducible therefrom.

Immediately previous to the betrayal, which ended in the mock-trial, condemnation, and crucifixion of Jesus, he, "knowing that his hour was nigh," uttered that affectionate address to his Disciples which John has recorded in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of his Gospel. You will remember that after Jesus had explained to his Disciples the duties of their apostleship—not the least of which is "that they should love one another"—he speaks of "*the world*," and the hardships and persecutions they would have to encounter therein. He says:—

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you,—The servant is not greater than the Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also.

“If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.”

It will be seen therefore that the words we are about to consider were spoken with immediate reference to the people amongst whom he had lived and taught, and by whom, unreformed by his teaching, he had suffered persecution, and was about to suffer death,—“If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin; but now they have no *cloak* for their sin.”

From this pregnant sentence of Jesus, we gather two important facts. One is (and we need no other proof of its truth, than our own observation and experience)—

That the plea of Ignorance, is sometimes used as a cloak or refuge from the temporal consequences of evil-doing.

The other is—

That where the Ignorance is real, *there is no sin.*

All that need be said in reference to the first mentioned fact is this—That the false plea of ignorance is ever a wicked, and a worthless one; for however we may succeed in persuading each other that our evil-doings are the result of

ignorance, when they are really the result of design, we cannot cloak them from the sight of *God*; nor from the *judgment* of God in the secret court of our own consciences. *There* we find that we have but added Sin to Sin by the false plea of ignorance with which we hoped to hide our Sin. It is because we *know* our deeds to be evil, and thence wrong, that we seek to hide it; and this proves the truth of the OTHER FACT which the words of Jesus reveal to us, namely,

That, where the ignorance is not feigned, but real, *in the sight of Heaven, there is no Sin.*

It is the *knowledge*, and the *intention* that constitute the Sin; Ignorance is incapable of Sin,—not of wrong-doing, but of Sin. Is it therefore desirable that Men should remain in the state of ignorance that they might thus avoid the consequences of Sin? This is an important question, and the answer will be readily inferred from the facts and considerations I am about to lay before you.

The Brute beasts cannot Sin; they cannot commit any moral wrong. We might teach them to do our bidding,—a shepherd's dog, for example, has been taught by its dishonest master to steal sheep; but the Law punished the Master, not the Dog. The Right or Wrong of a Brute's acts is its reasoning teacher's, not the unreasoning Brute's. It is only a creature endowed with a reasoning Soul,—a creature that is blessed with the power to perceive the consequences of its acts, to distinguish between happiness and misery, good and evil, right and wrong,—it is only a creature that is richly endowed with the means of Angelic Intelligence—*that can Sin.*

And this is the condition of every sane Man and Woman that is born into the world.—That we are *capable* of Sin is a fact, not to sigh over, but to be thankful for. It is a pre-eminence over the Brute which has no peril in it, if, with the power that renders us capable of Sin, we cultivate that other attribute of God which should accompany it,—His clemency, His loving-kindness, His never-failing Mercy; for this is the sum and substance of the Religion—rational because it is divine, and divine *only* because it is rational—that Jesus came to teach a world that was forgetting, and is still forgetting, its *Humanity*.

Without this liability to Sin, we should be no more than the animals, which are incapable of progress,—which know nothing of moral distinctions, nothing of Religion, nothing of God; and consequently, of whom we cannot predicate a hereafter,—whilst, *with* this liability to sin—with a Hell within us, if we knowingly persist in Sin, and a Heaven within us, if we manfully forsake or overcome it—we are beings “a little lower than the angels,” having a future before us to which there can be no termination, and a perfection in God-like attributes to aspire to, which is absolutely limitless.

It follows, that the more we know of our temporal duties—which teach us to love our neighbour as ourselves—the more we know of our spiritual duties—which teach us to reverence God, and live in obedience to His Laws,—the more we know of our own nature, physical, and mental—which teaches us what we are, and what we have the privilege of becoming—the more we know of the Revelation within us, written by God's own finger within our souls,—

the more we know of the Revelation *external to us*, distinctly written in characters that cannot be mistaken, on all His works, on everything that this earth contains from its surface to its centre, and in the heavens around us, studded as they are with shining worlds, “the thick-sown glories” of His love and power—the more we know of these, and the more we know of the Revelation of His will—dimly shadowed forth in the Bible—THE GREATER IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY, because the greater is—not the *probability*, but the *possibility*—of our committing wilful and deliberate Sin.

Ignorant of all these things *we could not sin*. Without the liability to sin, we must be without knowledge, without knowledge, we should be without consciences; and without consciences we should be (just as the Brutes are) exempt from that mental anxiety we call *Fear*, and from that inward tormenter, we call *Remorse*. We should have our animal appetites and wants, and our animal cares, anxieties, and affections,—for these the Brutes have as abundantly, as have Men; but we should have no Hope, no Heaven, no Hereafter: there would be no Beauty, no Loveliness, no Grandeur, no Sublimity, in all God’s glorious universe, *for us*; we should have no *Future*, no Past: the future now to us so rich in promise would be a hopeless blank: the *Past*—the slumbering ages—now to us so eloquent, would be dumb. In our troubles no tender sympathy, on angels’ wing would come to comfort us; no heavenly thoughts to cheer us; no friend, in tones of music, to bid us “Trust in God!” Let us be thankful, then, that we are Men, liable to Sin; and not Brutes, too low in scale of being, to be capable of committing Sin. This I say solemnly before God, that whilst *the*

commission of Sin, that is the doing of wrong *knowingly*, is a dishonor and a disgrace to us, and therefore to be guarded against, and resisted with all our souls and with all our strength,—*the liability to Sin*—which is the characteristic of Humanity—is *an honor to mankind*, and argues, neither *want of Benevolence*, nor *want of Foresight*, nor want of Power, IN OUR ALL-MIGHTY MAKER: and let the idolatrous creeds and catechisms of the Polytheistic Churches say what they will, there is no greater impiety, and therefore, no greater Sin, (when not committed in ignorance) than to say, (as these by implication *do* say) that God intended in the beginning, to create Man without this liability to Sin, but *failed* to carry out His intention!

May God, in His infinite mercy, grant us, and grant all men, ultimately, a far more exalted notion of His unspeakable perfections, than is implied in this belief; and save us from such *ignorant*, (when not sinful) such *sinful* (when not ignorant) *profanity*!

One word of God's truth, will out-weigh, (for it is Infinite) will out-live, (for it is co-eternal with Himself) the mistakes, and follies, and falsehoods, of all the generations of men that have ever lived on the earth, shroud them as they may in mystery, or hedge them about with anathemas, and the pains and penalties of Law.

God's own Truth—His Revelation, which men may *read*, but cannot tamper with—written on the rocks, and interpreted by Geology—a Science, *revealing facts that cannot lie*; His Revelation found imbedded in the solid crust of the Globe we live upon, and interpreted by comparative Anatomy, a *science*, the facts of which, *cannot lie*; His Revela-

tion, written in the Heavens, and interpreted by Astronomy and Mathematics, *sciences* built upon facts *which cannot lie*, attest that the account given of the creation by Moses, in the first chapter of Genesis, is neither literally true, nor figuratively appropriate: It being merely the fragmentary traditions of pre-historic science, rendered unintelligible by the misapprehension and misplacement of the several parts by the compiler, and *not* the result of divine inspiration, as until lately it was believed to be, by the Christian as well as by the Jew. But no intelligent man, whether Jew or Christian, whose unshackled mind leaves him at liberty to judge, *now* believes in this account of Moses as a literal account; or, as a *figurative* account, thinks it to be the result of special inspiration.

As I mentioned just now, the Bible-Revelation must be interpreted by God's other Revelations, *within* and *around* us. *When all agree, THE TRUTH IS CLEAR. When they disagree, we must earnestly seek for more light, thankful for that which already illumines us.* Now, read the three first chapters of Genesis how you will—as an apologue, or as a literal revelation of facts—there is no foundation for the belief that the relative *nature* of our first parents, fresh from the hand of God, was in any respect different from the nature of any of their descendants in any period of the world. The account asserts that everything that God had made “was perfect after its kind:” and God saw that every thing He had created “was very good”; and yet, though perfect after its kind and very good, the Brute was not a rational creature; nor was rational man incapable of Sin. He had but to be tempted; this Moses saw, and therefore we have

an apologue of the *Temptation*: in *this* case, a very appropriate and expressive apologue,—a Beast, or rather, a loathsome creeping reptile, is the Tempter,—plainly showing the correspondence between Sin, (self-gratification) and the grovelling sensualism of the typical Tempter—the consent of man to gratify his animal nature, lowering him to the level of the grovelling reptile. And, then, we have the apologue of the *Expulsion* from Paradise—from the Garden of Eden—again a very expressive and appropriate one, intended to warn mankind against the commission of Sin,—*that the natural consequences of Sin (loss of happiness, so long as the effect of the sin endures) might be avoided.*

There is also the *Judgment Scene*—somewhat profanely treated, and not so happily imagined, but having the same high *moral* for its object,—a warning against Sin of *all* kinds—and that of Sensualism in particular, which is the prolific parent of them all.

This is the Mosaic account, with the briefest explanation of it, I know how to give you; and I say again, whether we view the account as a literal relation of facts, or as a series of apologues having a highly moral meaning, there is no shadow of foundation for the impious and mischievous belief that God intended in the beginning to create man Sinless, and incapable of Sin, and that He *failed* to carry out His intention.

Let us, then, dismiss from our minds the common notion taught by the churches,—that the existence of Sin implies the existence of Satan; or that it justifies any belief involving in its consequences a *limit* to the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God.

Were we not liable to *Error*, we must have been Brutes: we could not have been what we are—*Men*—who, by battling with Sin, and conquering it, may win our way to a place of honour in God's kingdom.

Sin is, then, our *Glory*, *when we conquer it*; and our *Shame*—*when we suffer it to conquer us*.

The source of all Sin is Sensualism, that is, the abandonment of ourselves to our fleshly appetites and lusts.

Sensualism results, first, in Self-degradation; and, secondly, in a selfish and unprincipled grasping after the pleasures which God has made us capable of enjoying, without regard to the claims of our fellow-men, whose natural wants, and natural rights, are precisely similar to our own. God loves all His human children equally, and has impartially given to each, the power to enjoy an equal share of the pleasures derivable from the common bounties He has sent—and sent abundantly—for all. But each must help the others, and *then* we are *Brethren*; and none of us must *abuse* the blessings; but each must live and labor for higher ends, and then we are truly and emphatically *Men*.

The crimes which human Law punishes—horrible as some of them are—are not the only sins; frequently not the worst; and certainly not the most pernicious, in their widespread, contaminating, and degrading, consequences. All who fail—I mean *knowingly* and *needlessly* fail—in their Social duties,—all who violate the great Moral Law, which commands us to love our neighbour, as we love ourselves,—all who stoop to self-degradation, abandoning themselves to gluttony, drunkenness, and other sensualisms, *are Sinners*, not in the *Religious* sense of this Pew-and-Pulpit term,—not

in the sense of being Sinners by inheritance direct from Adam—a sense which carries no stigma in it—but honour rather—if we may judge from the complacency with which it is borne to church on Sundays and, put in our Prayers and Hymns as if it were a pearl of price, worthy of the acceptance of Him to whom we offer it,—*not Sinners in this sense*, but in the sense of *Law breakers by our own acts*,—Sinners who stand in need of every available aid to reformation and repentance.

Sin does not come by heirship; nor does it consist in offences committed against the majesty of God, and which by some are supposed to make God *angry* with us, in the manner of a being whom it were possible to offend; for in this sense *there is no Sin*; but it consists (as I have just stated) in self-degradation, and in the selfishness which grasps at more than our *just rights*, thereby infringing on our neighbour's rights, and violating the Moral Law—that Law which says, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

THIS IS SIN; and as I have just said, its source is Sensuality. *Believing this*, KNOWING this, I should be guilty of a heinous crime, were I to tell you that the “Devil” is its author. It might be convenient to suppose the existence of this great, bad, Being, and to shift our shortcomings, and our Sins, *on him*. It might be convenient (though not very logical) to shift the “Atonement” of them (whether they be *his* or *ours*) on the Sinless one who came to show us the way of their avoidance—on him who lovingly gave up his life to save us by his example. This might be individually *convenient*; but it is no remedy. Sin abounds, and ever *will* abound, under the influence of such a doctrine.

There is no mystery about the *origin* of Sin. There is no difficulty in accounting for its cause. It requires no Doctor, learned in "Divinity," to work its cure.

In this, our present state of existence, we have *two natures*—the Carnal and the Spiritual. Sin *comes* of our permitting our CARNAL NATURE to lord it over our SPIRITUAL NATURE.

The CURE for sin consists in conquering our carnal nature, or, in other words—enabling the Spiritual man to assert its just supremacy over the carnal man.

Do not let us deceive ourselves. This is a battle that every one must *fight for himself*. It is a self-purifying task that cannot be delegated to another. In common justice it *should* be so. *We* are to have the benefit; why should another make the sacrifice? Read the 5th, 6th, and 7th, chapters of Matthew, that is—Christ's Sermon on the Mount,—read all his parables, and thus dispel this mischievous delusion. It is *Sensuality* that fills the world with Pride, and Hypocrisy, and the madness of Power; and with Irreligion, and Immorality, and every conceivable Sin. It is the idea of a Miraculous Atonement that *KEEPS* it full. The idea is as far from Christ's christianity as the East is from the West in space, or as Sinful man is from the Sinless Heaven; and its consequences are mischievous in the extreme.

All wrong-doing is our own. When done in ignorance, it is venial error only; when wilfully committed (in the language of religion) it is Sin. If we would be Sinless,—if we would do what in us lies to wean the world from Sin, we must steadily guard ourselves against the misuse of those sensual enjoyments the possession of which are, at once, (if

rightly used) our highest glory; and (if abused) our deepest shame.

It has been beneficially ordained by the all-beneficent God, that each of our physical senses, shall be the source of PHYSICAL ENJOYMENT as well as of KNOWLEDGE AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESSION.

Revolve this matter in your minds,—study this momentous subject, and you will find that it is this Physical Enjoyment—this *Syren Pleasure*—this *application of the double blessing to its LOWEST*, instead of to its *highest*, purpose—that fills the world of humanity, with Misery, and tarnishes its annals with that Selfishness which is the fruitful source of Crime.

Pursue the thought in all its ramifications, and you will be satisfied (as I am) that this *lowest use of sensual enjoyment*, is the *basis on which all human Laws are reared*. You will see that there is no Legislation on earth but what is built on this false foundation,—that from the cradle to the grave we are subject to its unholy influence,—that the very sources of Religion and Morality are sapped by human Law,—and that it is for *Man the animal*, and not for his Angel nature, that the Lycurguses and Solons of the Earth have framed their codes!

It will be, however, a consolation to think that pitying Seraphs weep over our human follies, and that God in His infinite justice, does not (so far as they are committed in ignorance) account them Sins. They only become Sins as the light dawns upon us, (and when we *disobey* that light) which shews us their unrighteousness.

Small thanks to our non-progressive Teachers (and still

smaller consolation to the ill-taught world), the greater number of our misdeeds (and these, the fruitful parents of the smaller number and the worst) we at present commit in ignorance; but, when "*Learning*" shall signify *Wisdom*, and when Law means Love,—when all shall have been taught to live for the Soul, and not for the Body,—to look on physical enjoyments as MEANS, not ENDS,—*means* towards eternal progression—towards Holiness and Heaven—instead of *Ends* towards which to direct our legislation, and accommodate our Religion, and devote our lives,—*then* shall Sin vanish like the mists of the morning from before the presence of the Sun; then, (in the rapt language of Isaiah) men "shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." *Then*, "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the *haughtiness* of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day." In other words,—The spiritual God shall reign over a Spiritual Kingdom; men shall subordinate their physical instincts to the rule and guidance of their Spiritual nature, and thus rise above the restraints of human Law to share the Intellectual universe with Angels, whose progress, a *higher law* accompanies—but *hinders not*—for ever.

I have thus briefly (and few know better than myself how inadequately) laid before you, my views—*founded on the philosophy of Christ's teaching*—on the large subject of human Sin; of what it *is*; and how it came; and by what means it can be subdued and conquered. Chiefly, I wished to show you that Sin is not the production of that mythical monster—the Devil—but a *necessary consequence* of man's dual nature.

I wished to shew you that man could not be the sublime creature he is, without being subject to its influence. I wished to shew you that its source is in wilful ignorance and its concomitant—Sensualism; and its chief stronghold, in human usages and Laws; and in systems of Theology, *which accommodate themselves* to Sin, instead of, at all hazards, attempting its extermination. Much more might profitably have been said on all these points,—but enough for to-day.

Enough for to-day that we have the plain assurance of Jesus—tested and confirmed (or to us the assurance would be valueless) by the Heaven-bestowed instincts of Justice within ourselves—that *God does not attribute Sin, to those who are ignorant of the right*, or under the influence of a wrong conviction, which is the same thing.

But we have seen that whilst Ignorance is a safeguard against Sin and its concomitant, *Remorse*; it is itself a Sin when wilfully persisted in, because it is a violation of God's Law of Progress: it is (in effect) a voluntary renunciation of the Gift of Manhood, a voluntary withdrawal from the race for that prize—a crown of Righteousness, for which *All* are invited to struggle, and which *All* might win: it is, *at best*, but the choice of that thoughtless contentment which the well pastured Brute enjoys; but at *worst*—No! I will not close my discourse by saying what it is at worst; but this voluntary Ignorance—this tacit abandonment of duty,—this voluntary withdrawal from the conflict and the risks of Life, is not Righteousness, nor Happiness, nor Heaven.

My dear friends, though SIN is a rock upon which our bark may split, as it careers along the troubled sea of Life,—IGNORANCE is no safe haven, in which to take refuge.

Our refuge from Sin is in that "Knowledge and Love of God," which *preserves* us from Sin, by enabling us to conquer and overcome it—in that "Truth" which "makes us free"—in that great gift of Reason which enables us to "prove all things" that we might reject the evil, and "hold fast to that which is good."

May our faith in God enable us to "fight the good fight" and so

Obtain the victory!

Amen!

LAW THE REGENERATOR.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for, whatsoever a man soweth,
that shall he also reap.”—GALATIANS vi. 7.

MY FRIENDS,—We have a saying—full of wisdom, for it is the result of the world’s experience—“Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.” We may dispatch them on their evil errands with lightning swiftness, venom-winged; but, like the Australian’s boomerang launched into the air, they shall *return*—return to plague and torment the sender. Wrong is never a triumph, but always a defeat. The craftiest knave, like the cleverest plagiarist, in rifling others, only robs himself. Unlike human laws, which are uncertain in their operation and, under present circumstances, necessarily unjust, those which the All-Father has impressed on Nature and the soul of man, dispense, in every case, impartial punishment and reward, with a simplicity and certainty as grandly unerring, as they are infinitely beneficent, and merciful, and wise. “Those who follow after Righteousness shall obtain her, and wear her as a glorious robe.” So says Ecclesiasticus of old. But, *for the soul out of harmony with the natural Laws*, there is no consolation—no rest. Not *matter*, but *the Spirit of God which animates it*; not *Revelation*, but *God, the Revealer* present in our souls,

can bring this sweet consolation,—this holy and abiding rest. “There is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord.” Be not deceived: God is not mocked:—His hand is not shortened that it cannot save: neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear.” Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” There is no chance-work; all is Law. My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater,—so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah lv. 8, 10, 11.) And so it is and must be: Evil shall result in evil: Good in good—in the doer’s *soul*, if not in the doer’s *deed*.

Wrong shall come back to Right *sometime*. *Prosperous evil* is not: but that which seems so, shall, in the end, feel and know that all its seeming Gain has been real *loss*; its Pleasure, *pain*; its ideal of Beauty, *deformity with a painted mask*; its Treasures, *transient*; its Possessions, *dross*; yea, it shall feel and know that God’s Laws cannot be set at naught with impunity, nor the smallest violation of them escape its appropriate punishment. But be it remembered that God is All-beneficent,—that His *Justice* is always mercy,—His rod, corrective; and, that His retributive Law aims only at reformation: for “God hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner; but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live.” That “there is no peace for the wicked,” we are

told by Isaiah; and we read in the Psalms of David a sentence which, when rightly rendered, is exactly analogous thereto,—“The wicked shall be turned into Hell; and all the nations that forget God.”

Now, whatever may have been the Psalmist's *meaning*, this is the *fact*, and this, therefore, the true rendering of the sentence,—*not* the wicked shall be turned into a *place of torture* called Hell, but, that *Hell*—that is, *torture of some kind*, shall be turned into the wicked,—their tainted and guilty Consciences shall be their *torment*,—their Ill-gotten gains, their *bane*,—their material successes, *Spiritual defeats*,—their Hopes, *disappointments*,—their Accumulations, *air*;—and the same of “All the *Nations* that forget God,”—they shall “sow the wind only to reap the whirlwind,”—there shall be neither Liberty, nor Security, nor Peace—for them. For God hath proclaimed through all Nature, as well as by the mouth of His Prophet whose rapt spirit *read it there*, that “There is no Peace for the wicked”—until Tribulation and Repentance shall have brought about the needful Reformation.

To convince you that this is the Law, the Law of *God*—a Law *that cannot be either gainsaid or evaded*—will be my aim in the first portion of the present discourse,—to be followed, in the remaining portion, by such general applications of the Law to Christian duty, and the well-being of the world, as will naturally flow therefrom.

First then of the Law.

That is a LAW which is constant in its operations,—which has an *end* to attain, and is ceaselessly impelled towards its attainment.

Amongst the *material* things which exemplify the unvarying operation of the Laws impressed on them, are those shining worlds which float in space—Moons, Planets, Suns, and Systems—rotating about their centres, and moving through Infinitude in the paths prescribed for them, with a speed, and steadiness, and regularity, that, like their Almighty Author, knows “no variableness or shadow of turning.” *Inert* and *desireless*, THEY have no will but God’s; and that will is Law. Their paths and their motions *now* shall be their motions and their paths as long as the universe remains. Vast journeys they perform in periods which never change. Our planetary home, the Earth, rotates on its axis—the Astronomer will tell you in how many seconds, and fractional parts of a second—daily. He will tell you, and tell you truly, that it moves round its orbital centre—a journey of about 570 Millions of miles—once every year; and that the time in which its journey is performed does not vary the hundredth of a second in a hundred years. It is the same with the Moon’s motions. It is the same with the Planets. It is the same with the Moons and Planets that sweep around those almost infinitely distant central Suns which twinkle in the firmament and make our cloudless midnights beautiful. It is the same with our circling Seasons—with the Tides of the Ocean, the budding of the Trees,—the growth of the Corn and Herbage—and with the blossoming of the Flowers. Even the *Winds* are obedient to Law, and the *Clouds*, and the *Dews*, and the *Mists*—and the *Rain*. There is no Chance-work: all is *Law*.

At the first glance—to some it might not seem so; but the same Law by which Planets, and Suns, and Systems,

revolve in space—each for ever falling towards its centre—determines also the *ascent* of balloons and certain gaseous vapours, and the *falling* of the dews and rain. These are *true* facts,—although, to many, they might not *seem* so; for not an atom in all Nature is really volatile. It is the *tendency* (or, what we call the descent) of the *heavier atom* towards its natural centre, that causes the *lighter atom* seemingly to ascend. The smoke and vapours, which we see hurrying towards their kindred clouds, have no *volatile* or *special power*—contrary to the laws of gravity—to *ascend*. This is the process: By heat they have been rendered rarer, and thus the denser atoms of the upper air, following their tendency to the common centre, fall through the lighter ones, and thus force them cloudward, until they reach the point of distance from the common centre where it is natural, and therefore possible, for these heat-expanded atoms to abide. This seeming ascent of the smoke from our chimneys cloudwards, is therefore no anomaly. The Law of gravitation is not contradicted; nor can there be such a thing as *contradiction* in the operations of the Laws of God.

In like manner, to a superficial observer, it might also *seem* that man's Free-will, and the actions he performs in virtue of it, are independent of any higher Law. But it is not so; for, of all creatures and things, there are none more girt about and circumscribed by Law. *Matter* gravitates towards a *material* centre: *Spirit*, or *Soul*, towards a *Spiritual* centre—which is God. Even “chaos” was governed by Law. Our *will* has very narrow bounds. We might *do* a thing, or leave it *undone*,—say a thing, or

leave it *unsaid*—*remain where we are*, or *go*. But this is only freedom to a law *within*, and all outside of *this* is Law. What we *do* shall be right or wrong. What we *say* shall be true or false. Our staying here, or going yonder, shall not be absolutely *indifferent*; but either good or evil, well or ill, in its results. In things which are not of any *moral* importance, the Law which obliges us to one of two things frequently determines for us which of the twain we shall do; but in things which *are* of moral importance to us, *we exercise a Choice*; and here *Reason* (which is an inner Law) *decides*,—if well and *wisely*, good results,—if *ill* or *foolishly*, what we call *Evil* flows therefrom. We *act*, and thus incur the consequences. The Intemperate lose their *health*,—the Untruthful lose their *credit*,—the Thoughtless, their *opportunity*,—the Improvident, their *wealth*,—the Ignorant, their *liberty*,—the mean in Soul, their *Self-respect*,—the Covetous and Vile, the *respect of others*,—the Deniers of God and Goodness, *the friend in his bosom* that shall cheer and bless him when *all other* friends forsake him, and every earthly consolation fails.

All this is LAW. But does not God deal hardly with his creatures—by first obliging them to do or say that which is well or ill, and, if *ill*, attaching to their choice the painful consequences? No! We are not machines, but *Men*; and God is educating us to be Angels. We are to grow, expand, progress,—and *this* He has ordained, shall be only through *Truth* and *Goodness*,—for our human snatches of Truth and Goodness—our insight and appreciation of these celestial qualities—must for ever gravitate towards the Central Truth and Goodness of the universe, which is

God,—and thus, the *mode* of this growth and progress is determined by LAW.

Moreover, God has placed within us an ever-active, ever-craving, *DESIRE for this Progress*; and, as a natural consequence of this Desire, He has rendered the *means* of progress—that is, Truth and Goodness—*easy* to us, loveable, *Self-satisfying*, and *delightful*. This is the *natural* state of every human being. To prefer Falsehood to Truth, —to eschew Goodness and follow in the wake of Vice, is *not* natural to humanity; but arises solely from the *false* Education, and the foolish and false desires, implanted in our infant minds by the worldliness of a *mistaken*, not to say, God-denying, world. This I say advisedly, emphatically, solemnly!

But, to return,—we might (once we know them) *obey* these Heavenward-conducting Laws of God, or ignorantly *neglect*, or contumaciously *refuse* to obey them; but *the Law is*, that Disobedience shall result in the *stint or loss*,—Obedience, in the possession and growth, of those Spiritual wings on which the Soul must soar towards its native Heaven. Unhappy he (whatever might be his material status or condition) who blindly or wilfully refuses his obedience; but God's Justice is ever mercy; and, even he may unweave the web of worldliness he has woven, if he will; and, with holier aspirations and wiser aims, begin anew. And it is—*that we may do this*—that we may unweave our self-woven web of misery and begin anew—that we are made responsible for our Choice,—to Suffer and Repent, if wrong,—if Right, to press *onward*—ever *onward*—and *Enjoy*.

Knowing this—instinctively at least, if not with rational distinctness—the philosophic Paul (who had himself passed through the phases of wrong, and then painfully retraced his steps) announces the Law, and confirms the view I have just taken of its universality, in the words which suggested this enquiry, in pulpit phrase, in the words of our text. After warning us not to be “deceived,” and then, with Apostolic authority, declaring that “God is not mocked”—nor to be baffled in His designs by us (which you see is a most unscriptural thought), he says, (using a homely metaphor, that the Law it announces might be felt and understood by all) “Whatsoever a man Soweth that shall he also reap,”—Be he *whom* he may, or *what* he may,—Slave, or Slave-owner, Mendicant, or King,—he shall not do the work of unrighteousness with impunity; nor shall he make sacrifice after sacrifice for the public good, or in aid of a weaker brother, without feeling that he lives and moves within the hallowed precincts of a present Heaven—the approbation of his Conscience and his God.

Spiritual Laws, therefore, that is, the Laws which preside over the actions, tendencies, and determinations, of the Spiritual soul, are, like those which preside over the Material universe, *Self-executing*; they have nothing of earthliness or mere human power about them; and they thus proclaim that their Authorship is of Deity alone. And it follows, from the statement of the Law, and the certainty of its operations, that *all wrong-doing*, but that *most* which we *know to be wrong*—that *all unrighteousness* (however successful it might seem to be *in the race for Gain*, for *personal aggrandisement*, for *luxurious living*, for

aggressive power) must necessarily, from its very nature, tend constantly (whilst it continues) to that unchristian Selfishness which sears the affections, blunts the moral perception, obstructs all Spiritual progress, dwarfs the Soul, and drags it down from that Love of Truth and Goodness which is its native Heaven,—from that moral eminence for which it must *ever sigh, even whilst it mistakes, or wilfully neglects, the means*—to the inner torment of a self-made Hell.

Pitiable condition!—which robes, and gems, and gold, and grandeur—too frequently the *produce*—the *wages* of wrong-doing—can *never alleviate*, and rarely *hide*! Pitiable condition!—but *necessary*, withal, and *merciful*! for, we need no celestial visitant to tell us that *Goodness* must be the aliment out of which Angels and Seraphim must grow; and not out of the cleverness which makes us successful traders, or speculators, or politicians, or preachers, or gamblers in the share-market and the funds; and it is to transform us from *the selfish things* these clevernesses are making of us that God has declared “there shall be no peace for the wicked;” and that He has hedged us about with the pains and penalties of *inexorable Law*.

“Be not deceived,” my dear friends, “God is not mocked;” neither is His Law impotent or inoperative; and therefore the common notion cannot be true—that wickedness and habitual wrong-doing escape (even in this world) the retributive penalties they need; for even those “favorites of Fortune” who seem secure against vicissitude and sworn enemies to Care, *must have bitter moments that we know not of, and dreary, joyless hours—*

God only knows how many!—when they reflect on their mortality, and remember they are men.

All this is silently and surely dispelling the mists which circle about Falsehood, both in high and low, and is gradually preparing the way to a happier and holier state of things. Neither is it true that Virtue (which never makes its noblest sacrifices on its *own* account) *suffers* as some erroneously suppose—*without reward*—for VIRTUE NEVER SUFFERS BUT WHEN GOD IS BY!—and *then* there is a Heaven (which Inquisitors dream not of) even at the martyr's stake! So true is it, my friends, that "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap,"—so true is it—that which was spoken of old, in the name of Jehovah, by the Hebrew Prophet—"The word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Vain, then, is the striving of a misinstructed world against the everlasting Laws of God!—Vain, and full of misery!—for misery, and degradation, and suffering must be the inevitable consequences! Yes!—whilst this moral blindness—whilst this Sisypheus-labour lasts,—desolating wars, and more desolating diseases, must continue to plague us, and to convert this beautiful Earth—which God gave us to possess, to cultivate, and to enjoy—into a wilderness of briars and thorns; and the Souls of thick-coming millions of our brethren into something more sterile and cheerless still.

If you ask me where this physical and moral sterility exists—if you *doubt* that it exists—there needs no greater

proof that the Watchman sleeps who ought to guard us,—that the indolent Shepherd never sees half his flock,—that the Sentinels who should keep *Christendom*, at least, unravaged by the wolf, are deceiving us, and crying “Peace, Peace,” where there is no peace.

What is it that makes Lawyers and Legislators so busy?—that makes jails and gibbets permanent institutions among us?—that makes Teachers, both lay and clerical, (who are yet impotent to teach) so numerous and so active?—that gives Satirists occupation?—makes Wealth—mere wealth—a Power?—shrouds Truth’s bright Sun in the clouds of mystery and fable?—and robs our noblest Faith of its highest efficacy? My dear friends, it is our systematic disobedience—a disobedience we are bred and nurtured in—of the Spiritual and material Laws of God.

But you do not doubt of this sterility which needs the Christian husbandman,—of this destitution—Spiritual and Material—which only a practical recognition of the higher Laws of God—dispensed by Christ-like hands—can ever alleviate and cure. We all behold them!—for the books of Laymen have told us the long, sad, tale; and you know it, and I need not point you to those haunts in our great cities where Crime sculks from observation,—where Vice festers,—where Misery hides itself,—where Poverty languishes,—where Death and Destitution riots, and Disease despairs. We behold it all,—blame circumstances—blame human-nature—blame God—and then, with the complacency of the Priest and Levite of the parable—without a helping hand, pass by.

I am not about to enlarge on this sad subject. It is one

of deep and abiding sorrow. Not more so, perhaps, in our own favored island than in the other portions of Christendom,—not more so perhaps in Christendom with its Gospel-light, than in Turkey, Egypt, India, China, the heart of Africa, and elsewhere! Cold and cheerless consolation, certainly, and very modest praise! Statistics would shew us, however, that of men and women, of youths and maidens, and of children between the ages of two and ten, who are not circumstanced—intellectually, physically, morally—as *we* think God's creatures ought to be circumstanced, we, here in England, could reckon them by millions if we would; and on the same mode of computation, by hundreds of millions, if we take the world.

Now, were it of any use for Christians to talk of helping them—and I shall venture to do so presently—Statistics shew us there is “room and verge enough” for our endeavours. Remembering this, let us pass on to a brief and general application of *the Law Enunciated in our text*,—to our duty as Christians, and to the progress of true Religion among ourselves, and the other nations of the world.

We are bound to infer, my friends, from the Law we have been examining, that—if there were no Unrighteousness among men, there would be very little suffering,—that, if there were no Folly, there would be still less. If, therefore, Suffering is rife (and a glance across the world has shewn us that it must be) it follows that Wrong-doing and Folly (whether removable or not) are abundant,—that God's Laws are extensively violated; and that Religion is everywhere, more a sentiment than a practice,—more a pretence



than a reality,—more a hope than an endeavour,—more a faith than a life. Of “Worship” there is more than enough; of Obedience far too little; of Love, still less: of Sacrifice, avowedly none. I am not speaking of sects: I am not speaking of Christianity; nor of any mode of religious worship in particular; but of Religion in the aggregate,—the Religion of the world. Comparing the *condition* of the People with the *Religion* of the People (both considered universally) and assuming (as we are authorized in doing) that in proportion as the Condition—Physical, Intellectual, and Moral—of the majority, falls below that point in Physical, Intellectual, and Moral attainment of which this majority is capable, in that same proportion must the Religion of the world be defective: and where all this can be truly affirmed of four or five hundred millions of the People, we are justified in concluding (as just set forth) that Wrong-doing and Folly are everywhere abundant; that God’s Laws are everywhere extensively violated; that Religion is everywhere more a *Sentiment* than a *Practice*; more a *Pretence* than a *Reality*; more a *Hope* than an *Endeavour*; more a *Faith* than a *Life*,—and of declaring further (as before set forth) that of *Worship* there is more than enough: of *Obedience*, *far too little*: of *Love*, *still less*: of *Sacrifice*, *avowedly none*. We are more interested in this statement as *Christians* than as *men*. Is Christendom exempt from the condemnation implied in this statement? most certainly not! It can reckon, by scores of millions, the People whose Physical, Intellectual, and Moral Condition have been greatly, if not entirely, neglected. To come nearer home, even, Christian England can number

her neglected Sons and Daughters by millions also; and every sect, and every Church, must bear its portion of the condemnation. Does not the *stunted and pernicious fruits* we are reaping, convict us of the evil quality of the *seeds* we are sowing, and have ever sown? If there is truth in Reason, or in Scripture, the quality of the harvest shews unmistakably that our husbandry (I speak of England) must (especially for Christians) be eminently, if not radically, bad.

If by *Worship* we mean *Obedience* to God's Laws,—if by Obedience to God's Laws, we mean Love to our fellow-men,—if by Love to our fellow-men we mean Sacrifice, or the giving up, for the benefit of others, something we can ill spare, but something which is our own,—in other words, if by Religion we mean what Jesus meant—Love to God and Love to our fellow-man—then we shall seek *earnestly* for the cause of our shortcomings, and no less earnestly set about the life-long business of reform. Reform indeed is wanted,—less in Politics than in Christianity,—less in Parliament than in the Church. I believe that Science, and Literary Institutions, and the trade that is going on in cheap Literature (trashy and immoral as some portion of it is) is doing more to Enlighten, and Elevate, and Refine, and Spiritualise, the People, than *Religion* is—which *should be* more active, and more potent, in this national regeneration than all the rest. I believe, however, that Science and Literature make Sceptics and Infidels of many; but I also believe that Religious faiths and formularies make Atheists of more. Without particularizing my reasons for this belief, they will be made apparent to you as we proceed.

That which makes Religion almost powerless for good—and which, therefore, is *not* Religion, but robed and tinselled Error, which, without any genuine credentials, assumes its office and usurps its name—is the irrational and repulsive system of Dogmas it puts forth, under the name of Christianity, and, with the Sanction of the State, denominates Religious Truth. Where, in the simple, but sublime, teachings of Jesus,—where in the Enlightened understanding and intuitive perception of the Soul of Humanity, do you find the smallest sanction for that tissue of contradictions,—that composite medley of Jewish, and Heathen, and Hindoo Superstition, which this robed and tinselled Error calls on mankind to worship, and (one would suppose in derision) denominates RELIGION? Nowhere! Is it any wonder, as the world gets wiser in worldly things, it prefers *to do without a God*? Where in the Gospel-words of Jesus,—where in the intuition of Humanity, do you find the smallest sanction for that hourly-repeated libel on our common nature, which this robed and tinselled Error puts forth as the natural history of the species, and which it represents as an abortion no less dishonoring to the Creator than it is pernicious and degrading to the human race? Again I answer, Nowhere! Is it any wonder that a large portion of mankind, beguiled by the falsehood, and by other cognate circumstances impelled thereto—have taken this robed impersonation of Error *at its word*, and given themselves up to depravity, and sensualism, and marketable vice?

Where in the Gospel teachings of Jesus,—where in the Reason, or the intuitions, of enlightened Humanity, do you

find the smallest sanction for that most pernicious article of belief—put forth by this State-supported Impersonation of Error—which represents that this same teacher, Jesus, was divinely ordained to be a *Vicarious—and All-sufficient Sacrifice and atonement for every Sinner's Sin?* Once again I answer, NOWHERE! Is it any wonder (since a belief in this dogma is supposed to *ensure* its efficacy) that the horizon which bounds our view is everywhere black with Sin and Crime—ever and anon lighted up with the red glare of the battle-field—of the burning Cities, and homes of ruined thousands—of the torches of fiendish war?

I desist from further criticism.

It is an ungracious task.

Arising out of it, I had a word to say to you about Duty. But, if you believe with me, that mankind in general are not so well instructed,—are not so good, and so united, and therefore not so happy—not so heavenly-minded as they *ought to be*, and *might be*,—if you think, with me, that Christ's Religion—Love to God and Love to man—presented to the world in all its simple, touching, loveliness and beauty, would, with the force and certainty of Law, lead all mankind, as with a silken fillet, towards God, and Truth, and Happiness, and Heaven,—that it would refine and elevate the thoughts, and hopes, and faiths, and works, and Spiritual aspirations of ALL Humanity—tawny, and black, and white, regardless of blood or rank, or race—in a word, that this Divine Law of the Spirit, which works in unison with the Laws of material nature, *would*, perforce, and of necessity, regenerate the world,—then, *you perceive your Duty clearly*, and I need not say another word about it.

In such a case, to *know* is to *obey*: because, clear knowledge, free from doubt, becomes, from the first clear view of it, to your Consciousness and Soul, a *Law*,—a Law ordained of God, to lead you to the happiness—not of mere preaching and wishing, but of *doing* good.

To suppose that active Goodness, and generous Sacrifice, and divine Love, were used up and exhausted by Jesus, is to rob ourselves, and deprive the world of the unbounded benefit of his example; and to defer indefinitely the full glory which belongs to him, of being (because the ordainer of the *means*) the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race. *Supreme as is the honor*, he renounces it—until his great work is done. “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do* not the things which I say”?

Thus it was he rebuked his contemporaries who offered him lip-honors whilst they neglected his behests; and thus he rebukes *us*—in so far as this *false species of worship* is, by us, employed and substituted for the *true*. Thus also *he rebukes and repudiates the worship* of those, especially, who have *deified him*—made a God of him,—that, by calling him “Lord, Lord,” and by formal and profitless *worship*, they may excuse themselves from the *sacrifices* he bade them, and still bids them *make*; and the *work* he bade them, and still bids them, *do*. When this false mode of worship—this easy, but false, religion, is all but universal,—when beneficent Nature, which—“Never did betray the heart that loved her”—and “whose privilege it is, through all the years of this our life, to lead from joy to joy,”—When this all-bounding Nature, together with the written will of God, are *so interpreted* as to satisfy the majority, even of

Christians, that this false mode of worship,—this easy, but false religion, is *true and right, why*, you will ask me, are the universally-beneficent Laws of God I have been alluding to, so inoperative for good, although self-executive and divine?

The answer is—We have *two natures*,—the *Sensuous*, of which the spirit of the operating Law is *Selfishness*; and the *Spiritual*, of which the divinest part is *Love*.

We follow the first, with *earnestness*, as a tangible reality; the other, as a bare possibility, in *dubiousness and doubt*: hence *Selfishness* overshadows *Love*. We are proud to be animals, but ashamed to be men. Our system is, therefore, selfish; and, according to our worldly method of computing the results of it—IT PAYS. The Few who engross the wealth of the world and wield the temporal power, have reduced the majority to the slavery of obedience—*so it pays*. But the world *is* as we see it—Every “City of the Plain,” a Sodom which the Angel of God only forbears to destroy, because Sin is always doing the work of Destruction; and every Metropolis, where millions congregate, a Jerusalem guiltier than that over which Jesus compassionately wept. To reform our choice was the aim of Jesus,—to redeem us from Selfishness, and regenerate us, by the only possible Regenerator—the spiritual Law of Love.

Action, my dear friends,—*All-loving-action*,—all devotedness (after the example of Jesus) to Duty,—all noble sacrifice for Truth’s and Duty’s sake—is WORSHIP.

We must give ourselves to God,—our lives, and week-day energies, to the *work* of God—OR WE GIVE NOTHING.

It is not gifts of oil, or wine, or turtle-doves, or the

firstlings of the flock, or Spring's first opening roses, with which acceptable Sacrifices can, in this period of the world, be made to the King of Heaven—the universal Father of Humanity.

All this was well in the infancy of Time: it was beautiful in the days of Judah's pastoral Patriarchs—when Nations were families, and lived as brethren. Thus, Sacrifice meant, originally, an offering to God,—not to *propitiate*, but to *honor*. Fruits and Flowers—the choicest, the rarest, the most beautiful—were brought to the holy place appointed for their presentation. Simplicity, and innocence, and holy trust, prompted the offering; and none but the good, and the affectionate, and the pure in soul, felt themselves privileged to lay their offering on the altar. Then Sacrifice was a beautiful institution; and it will again be beautiful when the unwieldy world has come back to this primeval state of Brotherhood. *Our* work is to help to bring it back; and during this struggle between Selfishness and Duty, the wrapt words of Judah's Prophet-bard—in which he poured out his fervid soul to warn the people that these primitive ceremonials, which had been at their institution intended as the offerings of purity and innocence, could not become the compensating sacrifices for Selfishness and Sin,—these fervid words, and this warning, are as applicable to *us* of the present day as to those of old who, like us, only "*Crimsoned their altars to whiten bloody hands.*"

He says,—“Hear the word of the Lord, ye Rulers; Give ear unto the Law of our God. To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed

beasts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of he-goats, or of lambs. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination to me: the new-moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity,—even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed ~~feasts~~ my soul hateth: they are a trouble to me: I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash ye: make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil: Learn to do well: Seek judgment: relieve the oppressed: judge the fatherless: plead for the widow:—and, *then*, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword:—for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Mighty words! which have thundered along the centuries,—gathering power and meaning as they have rolled! Men had become Selfish; and out of Selfishness had grown (as they *ever* grow) Hardheartedness, and Sinfulness, and Crime. Then the Sacrifices ceased to be honor-giving, and became propitiatory: and thus it came to pass that the Martrydom of Jesus was viewed as a general Sacrifice, and said to be a *propitiation* for the general Sin. Sad mistake! It is not a *propitiation* that God demands of us, but a *return to Justice and Simplicity, and Innocence, and Obedience to His Law of*

Love. Nothing can be more explicit than the Prophet's words,—“Cease to do evil: Learn to do well.” How? By relieving the Oppressed, protecting the Fatherless, pleading for the Widow, and by learning how to be Just. And this is what Sacrifice means now;—*paying back* to the oppressed *what we owe to*, the oppressed, thus enabling ourselves to say with the psalmist—

“I will wash mine hands in innocency, O Lord; and so will I come to thine altar!”

But, my friends, how these things are to be *done*—whilst men keep on Sinning against Law, and Gospel, and the inner admonitions of God in our consciences, encouraged thereto by the comfortable assurance that Jesus is a vicarious Sacrifice—an all-sufficient atonement and propitiation for our Sin,—*how*, I say, these things are to be *done*, these daily Sacrifices *made* (with this almost universal error working against us),—on what particular plan they should be attempted,—and to what extent, are points I will not further discuss now. I will only ask you to *reflect* and *enquire*, and, if possible, to *determine for yourselves* whether these two little words—*Mine* and *Thine* (fraught as they are with such momentous meaning to us all)—are not at the bottom of half the Crime and Misery, and Madness in the world? And whether our false interpretation of the words PLEASURE, and HAPPINESS, is not the ever-originating cause of the other half?

My opinion is, *they are!* The Bible tells me so! The words and Life of Jesus tell me so! Paul and the other Apostles tell me so! The Laws of the universe, Spiritual and Material, tell me so. The voice of Nature, and the

inner intuitions of my conscience—which is the voice of God—all tell me so. *And I believe them all. And these all tell me that a radical reformation in the world's Religion is the only cure.*

It is to plead for this that I now speak. The work will be onerous and unpopular; and it *must* be *slow*: but there are hopeful signs. Among the better educated and more thoughtful disciples of the popular creeds, many feel their hollowness; and the old monkish Theologies have to be defended by new arguments as Science sheds new light on natural things, and as the Platform and the Press diffuse it. Hell has become a vulgar topic: the Devil is seldom named; the Earth is allowed to travel; and the universe is admitted to be old: astronomers may read the stars, and geologists, the stones, without fear of a citation for heresy, to be followed by the wheel, the thumbscrew, or the stake.

More hopeful still,—we, whom Reason has freed, have got rid of the notion that our Sins can be compounded for; or that any ought to bear the burthen of them but *ourselves*. We have abandoned (if we ever entertained) the belief of man's innate Depravity. We have arrived at truer and more honor-giving notions of God, and of more rational and ennobling conceptions concerning Humanity, and of the relationship between God and the Soul, than are avowed by other Christians. We trust in Reason; trust in Truth; trust in the modes in which God reveals himself, and announces His sovereign will; and we prefer to depend on these rather than on the unsupported dictum of the pious Creed-makers who lived in less enlightened times. Were it not so, I should despair of progress, or of much amelioration in

the Social, Intellectual, Moral, and Physical condition of mankind. On *us*, then, devolves the privilege of this high-calling. Let us express our *sense* of the privilege by thankfulness, and what we can of ACTION. Let us work in harmony, in the certain hope that Angel-minds with giant powers, will, from time to time, arise to help the Great Cause forward as the work goes on; and in God's own time, and by God's own instrument, it will be done.

Melodious always the *separate* voices which make up the Celestial refrain; harmonious the several tones; but the strains multiply, and the harmonies deepen, as the grand oratorio of creative regeneration rolls along—with here and there the *Solo* of some mightier bard, like that in Judah, or his of Bethany—pealing and reverberating through the galleries of Time,—while the very orchestra pauses to listen, and an audience of a thousand years hangs breathless on the Immortal song.

Thus shall the work be completed which Jesus and his Apostles, more than eighteen hundred years ago, began. God speed the work! To God be all the Glory!

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

A NEW YEAR'S SERMON

"We spend our years as a tale that is told."—Psalm xc. 9.

MY DEAR FRIENDS, How much food there is for reflection in these simple words!

Since our last meeting a new year has dawned upon us—and the old year has closed on us for ever: it is to *us* as a narrative we have been listening to—"as a tale that is told." *Every* year, every month, every week, every day, is to each and to all of us "as a tale that is told." The departed year, if passed in review before us, would seem, no doubt, a pleasant tale to many, a comic tale to some, a tragic tale to thousands, and, if rightly viewed, a serious tale—a tale full of eternal interest—to all. For Good or Evil, for Weal or Woe, the deeds done, the thoughts uttered, the opportunities neglected, are past recall,—they are matters of history, they are, both nationally and individually, "a tale that is told." Our mode of life, our thoughts and actions, have been Wrong or Right, Wise or Foolish—*all of them*. In their religious and moral relations, *none* of them have been *indifferent*. Hence, they reflect honor on us, or lay us open to reproach,—they are *germs* of Happiness, or seeds of Woe,—they cheer or chide

us,—they yield us Joy, or call for Penitence,—they are Angels with blessings, or Demons with a lash. We are *better* than we were a year ago, or we are *worse*. We have *grown* in Spiritual stature—in Righteousness, in Holiness, and in Christian Love, and are thence nearer Heaven nearer God; or we have *shrunk* in Spiritual stature, and have forged chains for ourselves which fetter us to the Earth. Reflective minds and tender, wakeful, consciences *know* these things, and, in reviewing the tale of the past year, are pleased or pained; and are, moreover, *wiser* and *better* for the retrospect. But, with the majority of us, it is different: we are like unwise traders who never take stock, and do not keep accounts; and, like them, shall not obtain our certificates. *if we fail*. To those of us who are unaccustomed to reflection, *to-day* blots out and eclipses *yesterday* in our memories, as to-morrow will eclipse and blot out *to-day*. But, if we would build up for ourselves a Heaven on Earth, *this must not be*. It is true we have, many of us, little *time* for reflection, little *aptitude*, and perhaps *less desire*. Our monotonous occupations are conducive of intellectual and moral apathy, and *this* the more certainly because of our habit of seeing things with our physical eyes, and not with our mental understandings—which is in reality, viewing things without seeing them, or seeing them to no purpose because seeing them only in part,—a state of mind which is deadening to our faculties, obstructive to our Spiritual progress, and never fails to lull our consciences to sleep: the consequence whereof is—we fancy that, of *our* years and *our* yesterdays *no record exists*. Hence, we take no heed of the matter; we are rendered neither miserable

nor happy by a retrospect which we *do* not or cannot take, —by the “tale” of our past lives which, because we have forgotten, or do not trouble ourselves to remember, we believe to be nowhere recorded. There cannot, however, be a greater error; and, therefore, in all this we deceive ourselves, for—whether he knows it or not—every man *is a living history of himself*. The “tale” of his life; the record of his habitual thoughts; the story of his secret, or avowed, desires—all are registered in his character, depicted in his manners, indixed on his countenance, blazoned in his eye. If strongly marked (as they always are when so habitually indulged in as to have become the master-passions of the mind,) *all men can read them as though printed in a book*; but whether this autobiographical record be thus manifestly legible to others or not, *the record itself is there*,—a record which (whether bad or good) can only be effaced by writing over it a *worthier one*, or scribbling over it a *worse*. As a familiar example, look at the degraded victim of intemperance. It requires no Daniel to read the writing on his bloated visage—in his “lack-lustre eye.” Eloquent and awful is the record written there! “Sensualist, Madman, Idiot! thou hast been weighed in the balance of Free-agency, and found wanting; thy health, thy heritage, and the ‘talent’ that was entrusted to thee by thy Creator to thy use and keeping, have been taken from thee, and given to another!”

My dear friends, we all know the victim of Intemperance at *sight*, and the keen-featured *Miser*, and the lewd-eyed Voluptuary. We know the falcon-gaze, the compressed and bloodless lip, of *Cruelty*, and the dogged, downcast, look of the mere human *Brute*. We know them, and instinctively

avoid all contact with them—if we can. We know also, without any other herald than themselves, the trust-inspiring features of genuine HONESTY; and the bland aspect of pure BENEVOLENCE,—radiant and loveable, as the bright sunshine in winter; balmy as the breath of violets; beautiful as summer roses; open and affluent as the summer's day. Yes! we read each other's characters where we find them thus broadly legible, and guess and speculate where we cannot read; but ever, in so doing—be it remembered—*we write our own*. And in all this we are admonished to be charitable, for it is a Law of our nature that harsh thoughts imprint harsh lines upon the countenance, showing us that Christ's Christianity (which is in *harmony* with our nature) must ever consist in kindness and sympathy towards our erring brothers, and not in pious wrath and Calvinistic commination. We may *admonish* and *save* our falling brother if we can: we have nothing to do with monkish cursings and denunciations. God has so ordered it (as we shall see presently) that Judgment can never fail, and that no man can innocently presume to sit in judgment on his brother. Of course, I speak not here of public magistrates, who, as long as Crime and Social institutions, on their present plan exist, *must* summon offenders to the tribunals where erring human judgments are dispensed; but I speak now of *Priests* and *private* individuals touching social faults which the laws dispensed by Magistrates fail to reach. Here *all* men—and most of all the Christian Minister (whose divine Master “came, not to condemn the world, but that the world through his all-loving example might be saved,”) are admonished that we may in nowise “judge” without

“being in danger of the judgment.” And what I wish to take this opportunity of showing you is that this principle of Christianity, so well known in theory to us all, *is in perfect harmony with the prior Laws of God, as these Laws are stereotyped in our physical and mental constitutions*; as well as to show you the *modus operandi* by which God’s judgments are carried out, and the utter impossibility of their failure, or *evasion*.

We have seen, my friends, how, in extreme cases (whether simple or complex, bad or good,) men write the “tale” of their lives in such legible characters on their physiognomies that all men might read them, and thus possess themselves of these secret histories—at will: it follows as a corollary in reason that *there also* are indixed (whether decypherable by men or not) the life-long story of the soul, whose workings give the Intellectual and Moral *expression* to the perishable tenement it dwells in—thus preserving (during life) the self-inscribed mementoes of its own honor, or disgrace. All this is *certain*: and not *less certain this other fact*, that, in our IMMATERIAL MEMORIES exist (little as we may suspect or desire it) every fact and circumstance of our lives, preserved as though printed in a book,—that *there* nothing is omitted, nothing is falsified, nothing is lost,—that *there*, at least, is a point-blank statement of the pure facts *as we knew those facts* at the time they were recorded. Now, “if, when a man dies he shall live again,”—if the Soul’s essence be indeed immortal, *then*, that this *immaterial memory* should accompany us into our new existence is a fact as predicable by pure Reason as it has been rendered certain by Revelation. But circumstances are constantly occurring

which afford us natural *evidence*, proving this inference of our Reason, and this assurance by Revelation, with almost the completeness of a mathematical demonstration.

Some years ago—it may be thirty—a young officer of mark and education fell overboard at sea; he could not swim; and was only rescued from his perilous position just in time to save his life. After his recovery he gave a most interesting account of his experiences during the act of drowning. This narrative was published, and excited much attention at the time. I read it some years since, and therefrom gathered these particulars.—To persons in the act of drowning these events occur: First, of course, a struggle with the watery enemy for life. This past, despair, and a feeling—described as almost painless—of suffocation. Then thoughts of home,—of Brothers, Sisters, Father, Mother, Friends—thoughts of what *they* would feel on the reception of the tale of woe in store for them. Then follows a calm—a halcyon, blissful, calm, quite passionless, and undisturbed by any distracting circumstance or active thought—a state of passive being merely, destitute of all consciousness of anything but a placid, unbroken, happiness. This passes, and another phase of the soul's consciousness begins.

The whole tale of its life, from first to last, as of a panoramic scene, passes in review before it: in other words, it *lives* its whole life again,—goes through it, phase by phase, circumstance by circumstance, fact by fact. Places visited, words spoken, acts performed, things long ago forgotten, are seen, and said, and done, and recollected, passed through and experienced, once again. Their good and evil aspects are

painfully or pleasurably distinguished and particularised, and with a force and vividness that defies description. *Here* is no "dread of falling into naught;" no *vis inertia*; no decrepitude; but, on the contrary, a new found power, a zest, a winged strength unfelt, unused, unknown, till now,—for the whole life has been re-remembered and re-lived—some thirty years—in half as many seconds! Now, in *all* cases of drowning *these, I believe, are the stages*; and whenever the drowning person is rescued during this last stage in which the Soul is re-enacting its whole life—re-remembering the Evil and the Good thereof—the experience in every case (and I have heard of many) is precisely that of the rescued officer—the same marvel of a whole life re-remembered and re-lived in a few brief seconds. *Here is* proof, then, that the tale of our lives which we stereotype on our features during the body's life, has, as I begun by assuring you, its counterpart in the IMMATERIAL MEMORY also—a record which survives the physical record, and passes through the portal of the grave to the never-ending life beyond it—our credentials, or our ban.

Thus, my friends—our Knowledge—the forgotten tale of our years and yesterdays—might *slumber* in the memory, but *it never dies*. We may forget it utterly, but it is there,—reminding us of the dormouse in the ivied tower which sleeps whilst winter lasts, but wakes with the warm breath of spring; or of the life-germ in the seed; or of the sweet music that slumbers in the harp-strings, awaiting but the master's touch to wake it into utterance. And thus, my Christian friends, the body's death is but the Soul's awakening into immortality,—awaking, but *with the story*

of its eighty years of yesterdays awakened too—the color and contexture of which shall determine its place for weal or woe, in its new existence—determine whether it shall sink or soar.

Have you not seen—I have—a bird with clipped, or wounded wing, sitting sad and solitary on the ground it cannot rise from, whilst its full-winged companions soar high in the blue firmament, wheeling in mazy circles round and round, enjoying the sweet freedom of limitless space, and careering whithersoever their wild, glad, wills might lead them? *Such* might be the torturing fate of the sin-clogged spirit in another life, until, with painful waiting, its sins be cleansed away (in the new life as in this) by degradation, self-imposed; and by self-inflicted sorrow, and repentance. Be this, however, as it may—*What a man makes himself, that HE IS.* At his death, he awakes to a new life, with the newly-awakened memory of his Righteousness or his Sins about him,—*and so he goes to Judgment.*

And what is this judgment?

We read in “the Revelation” by St. John, of the recording Angel; and of the great “Book” in which our lives, be they bad or good, are written; and of the last trumpet summoning all men to judgment; and of the Judge; and of the throned judgment seats; and of the irrevocable sentence which awaits us all.

Now this “VISION” of “John the divine,” which he saw, as he tells us, “in the Spirit,” “in the Isle of Patmos,” “on the Lord’s day,”—this sublime picture of the Last Judgment (which we must regard in its *metaphorical*, and not in its literal sense) announces A VAST TRUTH, the magnitude and

sublimity of which is not reached by the hallowed poetry of these much-misunderstood and variously interpreted "Revelations." There *is*, indeed, an ASSIZE before which all must come; a RECORD which will not lie; a WITNESS which cannot be suborned; a SENTENCE from which there can be no appeal.

My dear friends, the Recording Angel, as we have just seen, exists *within us*: the long story of our years and yesterdays, circumstance by circumstance, fact by fact, is legibly written in our Consciences: the Last Trumpet is our latest sigh; every man will go to judgment—his own accuser—his own witness—his own judge.

The Judgment-day—the great day of the world's Assize, so grandly imagined, so sublimely sketched, in the Apocalypse, is a HUMAN THOUGHT; but the simple truth announced therein is infinitely grander and more God-like. "His ways"—the ways of Him "who liveth and reigneth for ever"—are "not as our ways." His tribunals bear no resemblance to ours; nor His agents; nor His ministers of justice; nor His equity; nor His laws; nor their mode of execution. His laws are self-executing: His judgments just and sure. What a man makes himself, *that he is*. If he has manfully fought against evil—FOUGHT and *failed*, he shall stand *with the CONQUERORS* of evil—SELF-EXCUSED: if he has consented to wickedness—yielded to unrighteousness without an effort, he shall stand, as David in his iniquity stood before Nathan, SELF-CONDEMNED. This is the Law as we find it written in the Bible, and re-echoed by the "still small voice" within us, and exemplified in all the works of God; and even the guiltiest among us must exclaim,

in the depths of the Soul's penitence—"IT IS JUST!" "IT IS JUST!"

Thus is God's justice vindicated, His law executed, Himself glorified and honored, and our laden Consciences disburdened and relieved.

If these things, my dear friends, are *true*, it is clear that we cannot "do" our Religion by deputy. If these things are *true*, it is certain that there is no "name under Heaven" that can save us from the natural consequences of our misdeeds; for, as night follows day, as effect follows cause, as the "conclusion" of a syllogism follows the "premises," so must wrong-doing meet *somewhere* with its appropriate punishment; and every virtuous action, here or hereafter, meet with its deserved reward. If it were *not* so, Reason would be a mockery, Revelation would be a blinding myth, and God—shorn of His moral attributes—would cease to be! If I could compound for my Sins, as for my turnpike tolls and taxes—so many Paternosters for so many sins—what would the arrangement amount to but a *License* from the good God to lie, to steal, to rob, to murder, to oppress my neighbour, to enslave my brother: *to do*, in short, any wickedness *at will*,—thus making God a *dispenser of indulgences!*—the very *thought* is impious. Not by "*much praying*," but by *virtuous living*—by *doing* the will of our Heavenly Father in all things—can we be worthy followers of our divine Leader, who lived—*not for himself*, but for *you*, and *me*, and *all men*—that by worthily following *him* we might reach "the Kingdom." Goodness was not exhausted in Jesus; nor will it ever be exhausted whilst there are the Halt, and the Blind, and the Dumb, in the

midst of us,—whilst there is Hunger to be fed, Homelessness to be provided for, Wretchedness to be raised, the Sick and Sorrowing to be healed and comforted, Superstition and Ignorance to be put to flight,—whilst there are little children to be “blessed,” and taught, and cared for, and friends and neighbours to be loved. The *bane* of the world is *Selfishness*. The hope of the world is Love,—

“ *More sweet than odors caught by him who sails
Near spicy shores of Araby the blest,—
A thousand times more exquisitely sweet,
The freight of holy feeling which we meet,
In thoughtful moments, wafted by the gales
From fields where GOOD men walk, or bowers wherein they rest.*”

There is no *merit* where there is no choice. A miraculous *birth* is nothing: a miraculous *death* is nothing: a *holy and religious* LIFE is all. Let the Psalmist, who furnished the thought for these reflections, help us still—“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: it is like the precious perfume upon the head, that fell down unto the beard—the beard of Aaron—to the very border of his garment: It is like the dew of Hermon, and the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded His blessing, even *life* for evermore.”

Let us say with the American poet,—

“ Tell me not in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the Soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! life is earnest!
And the grave is not the goal:
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the Soul.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime;
And, departing, leave behind us
Footsteps on the sands of Time,—

Footsteps that, perhaps, another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and ship-wrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for every fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

Let us learn to feel with a poet of our own that—

"Death is the shadow of Life; and as the tree
Stands in the Sun and shadows all beneath,
So, in the light of great eternity,
Life eminent, creates the shade of death.
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
But Love shall reign for ever over all."

Let us, in the darkest hour of our Sorrow, say, with
Robert Browning—

"I stoop
Under a dark tremendous sea of cloud:
It is but for a time: I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendors soon or late
Will pierce the gloom: *I shall emerge some day.*"

Let us be ever ready to exclaim, in pious reverence, and in faith unfaltering, with the prophet Habakkuk,—“Art thou not from everlasting to everlasting? *O God! mine Holy One!* WE SHALL NOT DIE.”

Above all things, in our business, in our pleasures, in the bosoms of our families, and in all our dealings with our fellow men, let us remember always—that our lives are written in our Consciences as in a book, and that, sooner or later, they will have to be re-remembered—to our Shame, or to our Honor, to be re-told. “Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children.” And the grace of God, as it is in Jesus, be with you all. Amen

GOD IS NOT MOCKED:

A BI-CENTENARY SERMON.

“Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but by love serve one another.

“For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

“Stand fast therefore (he writes in the first verse of the same chapter) —Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”—
GALATIANS v. 13-15.

THUS, MY FRIENDS, and much more to the same effect, writes Paul to the brethren in Galatia, whom he, by his preaching, had converted to Christianity, and whom, since he left them, the Jews had been stirring up to despise him, and to seek justification by the works of the law, and the observation of the Jewish ceremonies. Against these ceremonies he warns them; and as to the “Law” “it is fulfilled,” he tells them, in one word,—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:” therefore his counsel to them is—“By love serve ye one another;” for “if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of

another." He presently adds, "Be not deceived: God is not mocked:" and then illustrates his argument by this homely and familiar truism, "For whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

The deep philosophy of these passages is easily overlooked by careless readers: by attentive readers it is as easily seen: and *when* seen, not soon forgotten—"God is not mocked," he says: which means God is the author of the *minds* and *natures* of men, and of the hidden laws by which these minds and natures work and are affected. He has made our natures to be painfully affected by injustice; the instant our minds perceive it *to be* injustice; and He has made our natures to feel resentment against the author or agent of this injustice (if perceived to be intentional) so long as it continues to affect us. And He has made our natures to be pleasurable affected by kindness the instant our minds perceive it *to be* kindness: and He has made our natures to feel a corresponding kindness towards the author or agent of this pleasurable sensation, not only as long as the sensation lasts, but generally as long as the kindness and the author of it are remembered. *GOD made our minds and natures, and the Laws by which they operate and are affected. He*, and not ourselves, is the Author and Ordainer of these resentments against injury; and of this natural interchange between men of Love for Love. Therefore, says Paul, "God is not mocked; His Law is sure to operate: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" and therefore, says he to the Galatians, "By love serve one another:" for Love will beget Love, and the "Law," the whole Law, "will be fulfilled:" never heed the Ceremonies,—the Circum-

cisions, the Baptisms, the Confirmations, and the like; but “stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” And remember, if you forget this Law of Love which *Christ propounded (but which GOD made)*—if you *use* this Liberty for an occasion of the flesh—if you seek for dominion and power, if you bite and devour one another, take heed; for *this use* of Liberty is *License*, and not Liberty, and mark, says he, what are its manifold and monstrous results—“Lasciviousness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Envyings, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like”—as exterminating wars, and Laws that enslave both Body and Soul—“of which I tell you now, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” But, he continues, “The fruit of the Spirit (that is, the natural fruit of our *mental nature* which revolts at all injustice and delights in the exercise of Love,) is Peace, Joy, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance; against such there is no Law.” And this, my friends, is the great lesson, for the guidance of all men, contained in the 5th Chapter of Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians. Paul had studied Jesus, and the unwritten Laws which govern the feelings and actions of humanity, more truly and thoroughly than they have ever been studied by any of the professed teachers of Christianity, even to this day. Yet Paul announced nothing and Jesus announced nothing, but what is written (if I might so express myself) by God’s own finger in the nature and mental constitution of every human soul. This Epistle of Paul is Bible enough though

no Jewish history had ever been written, and no Jesus of Nazareth had ever existed, and without the prior revelation, the ever-continued revelation, of God in the souls of His creatures—this lesson of the learned and laborious Paul were *useless*; for, without the appreciative echo within us it might as well have been addressed to the viewless winds, or to the senseless rocks, as to us. Yet, somehow,—from erroneous teaching, and from man's dependence thereon, we are become, most of us, as senseless to Paul's teaching as the *rocks*; and are about as little acquainted with our own nature as the unreasoning animals are with theirs. I shall give you a tolerably conclusive proof of this assertion presently. Meanwhile, think again of what Paul has said to us; and ask yourselves if Christian ministers, ages ago, had believed in Paul, whether the history of the Christian Religion (as it is called) could possibly have been a history of bickerings, and bloodshed, and persecution, between Christian and Christian, such as we find it from its establishment—with more or less of intensity—down even to this very day. This blindness of our Teachers began by the Jews handing down to us a history of their nation (partly fact and partly fable) containing a false notion of God, and a libellous character of human nature.

Not a word of their fables is sanctioned by Jesus; not a glimpse of their God is reflected by him; not a syllable is uttered by him to justify their libel on our nature! On the contrary, directly or by implication, the whole of it is repudiated and denied. But alas! the *words* of Jesus have passed among our teachers for nothing; and the lucid arguments and philosophisings of Paul (who seems not

always consistent with himself) have been passed over as of no account. But let us judge of his truth and clear-sightedness, by the *events*; and then let us judge of the actors in some of the more recent of those events *by the Truth*, as we find it, so clearly set forth, and so authoritatively insisted on, *by him*. The one will illustrate the other. He says, all our bickerings, and burnings, and bloodshed, and bitter persecutions, have come from the fatal Liberty we possess *of doing wrong*; and *could* not have come of that nobler Liberty enjoined on us by Christ,—that freedom from the bondage of external Law which springs from the practical goodness that Jesus and the Apostles have named LOVE. And (as we have already seen) he *must* be right in this *if God made our nature, and if, according to that nature, kindness engenders kindness, and hate engenders hate, and wrong engenders wrong*.

This Equity—this natural rendering of Hate for Hate and Love for Love, is common to us all. But some natures, in which right reason predominates over the feelings, rise above this mere equity in Love and Hate, and aspire to be forgiving and beneficent; and are thence nearer akin to God. Jesus of Nazareth was one of these, the most conspicuously eminent among men. After he had said, "In obedience to the Law of God within you, judge of other's wants, and feelings, and aspirations, *by your own*, and thence, in all things, do unto other men as you would other men should do unto you,"—he said further (and he lived it too!) "Love even your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; bless them that curse you; return good for

evil; for if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the Publicans the same? And if ye salute your *brethren* only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Publicans so? Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth His rain on the just and the unjust." Let the learned interpreters of Scripture twist these godlike words as they please, they are still the letter and spirit, the very sum and substance, of *the Religion of Christ*. Bare justice (doing as you would be done by) is the moral Law—beautiful, but imperfect! But beneficence like this, raises those who practise it into a far more exalted kinship with God. THIS IS THE RELIGION OF CHRIST. It abrogates *all ceremonial Religion*, and supersedes the mere Bull-dog morality of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." It is *not possible* that the TEACHERS, or the TAUGHT of *this divine Religion* should be found "biting and destroying one another." But, if out of the Bible, if out of the teachings of the Prophets, if out of the Gospel of Jesus, or out of the Acts of the Apostles, or out of the epistles of the philosophic Paul, or (which is the likelier) out of their own worldly-minded wilfulness, men will cull a Religion whence these bitings and destroyings necessarily come, *then* it is both natural and right that persecution should breed persecution among them, and that the Biters and Destroyers should be themselves bitten and destroyed.

Without this animal principle of Revengefulness and Retaliation in our nature, we should have been mere *unreasoning brutes*, or else *errorless Angels*—we could not

have been MEN. To the brute portion of us which perisheth, God has conjoined the Angel intellect, with Liberty to live for either,—to live for the flesh that perisheth, or for the immortal intellect that soars: if we choose the flesh, then the moral law of Moses, “a tooth for a tooth,” is both natural and right; but if we choose to live for the *Angel spirit that dwells within us (prompting us to this choice)* then the moral law of Jesus comes into play; we mete out in all things the same measure to others that we desire for ourselves; and thence we learn of Jesus to do *more* than this—“to love those who hate us”—“to be perfect as our Father is perfect”—to clothe ourselves, (as *he* did humanly) in all the beautiful attributes of God.

My friends, once again I have been moved by the Spirit that lives in me *to show you all this*, because this is all there is to show you about real Religion. The misinstructed world *is not ripe* for *this* Religion; and *I* know no other; then wherefore should I preach?

The so-called “*Christian Religion*” is not the RELIGION OF CHRIST; *nor anything* like it. *Its* doctrines in their practical significance mean *this*,—“Hate your enemies; curse them that would bless you, return evil for evil, after the manner of the flesh; Love yourselves only; show your Love to God in your hate to all men who, living out of the pale (bounded by Anathemas) which you have erected for yourselves, shall dare to seek any other road to Heaven than yours; deem all such schismatics, heretics, and pursue them, if need be, to the death. Let there be no love, no peace, between you and them unless they hold with us and Calvin that all men are born in sin,—*must* sin continually;

and that *we*, being of the small number of God's elect, if we but *confess* our sins, Christ has already suffered the penalty of our transgressions, and *paid* our debt!" This is, *practically*, the creed of Christendom—the creed which even the appointed ministers of this Religion (when they have had the power) have remorselessly acted out. All ecclesiastical history proves this terrible description to be the literal fact. At one small but important page of this history we will take a passing glance. We will judge of the *Truth* of Paul's unheeded warnings by *the events* which followed the neglect of them in England by both Ministers and People,—by the *Teachers*, and the *Taught*. The event to which I refer—the persecution which drove two thousand ministers from the pale and protection of the English Church—occurred about two centuries ago. It is a signal *example*—an example on a large scale of the truth of Paul's so solemn adjuration—"God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap." And one of the happy consequences is,—*we* of this day, have *partly learned the lesson*: our *tactics* have altered, if *not our faith*: our hatred (I am speaking of the nation)—our hatred has *diminished*: and our *toleration*, if *not our love*, has filled up the void of our abated persecution and sectarian jealousies. A blessed change! We are on the high road to christian freedom: and when the nation shall have learned to understand it, and to love it, we shall indeed *be free*; for, "against goodness, and meekness, and temperance, *there is no Law*,"—no *revolt* in our nature—or *innate sense of injury*—which makes it so difficult for most of us to rise to the simple dignity of Jesus, and, like him, to

repay the wrongs we unjustly suffer, by gentleness and love.

Saint Bartholomew, one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus, when told by Philip of the Messiahship of the gentle Nazarene, expressed his doubt that any good could come out of Nazareth. He was afterwards convinced of his error; became an Apostle; and died a martyr; having been flayed alive in Albania, and then crucified with his head downwards.

On Bartholomew's day, in 1572, occurred the widely-extended and most treacherous massacre of the Protestants by the Roman Catholics, in France,—bloody and exterminating almost beyond parallel, and only equalled in atrocity by a similar massacre by the Catholics in Ireland, which an English army, under Cromwell, soon afterwards avenged.

Ninety years after the French massacre, namely on Bartholomew's day, 1662, (which fell on a Sunday then as it does now) occurred the religious persecution (just referred to) which the non-conformists of England commemorate to-day,—the expulsion of about 2000 ministers of the Church of England from their benefices for the (religious) offence of non-conformity to the discipline of the Church as set forth in a formulary known as the Book of Common Prayer. The expelled Ministers (as most of us know) were Presbyterians; strict disciplinarians in their way; rigorous Calvinists; very pious; very bigoted; they objected to officiate in the surplice; they disagreed with some portions of the Prayer-book, and refused to read these portions; and above all they denied the right and power of the Bishops in the Church, and took exception to *their* mode of governing the Church

in toto. Prelacy was their abhorrence: the Government of Ecclesiastical affairs by a council of Ministers, Presbyters, and Elders, was their *beau-ideal* of Church Government.

Two or three thousand of such men are difficult to deal with,—they are *dangerous enemies*; and (to those less severely grave in their manners and less ungenial in their dispositions) *not the most loveable and delightful friends*. The method taken to get rid of them by the Prelatical party who had powerful friends,—the King (Charles II.) was with them, because, if there must be any religion at all, he preferred those who treated it the most lightly, and said the least about it; and the Parliament was with them, because compliance with the Court (which was somewhat dissolute) would delight the Bishops, and not displease the King,—was this: to get an Act of Parliament that would do one of two things, silence these Puritanical Ministers by forcing them to conform to the discipline of the Church, or expel them for non-compliance. The Act of uniformity was therefore passed, and came into operation on Sunday the 24th of August 1662, over two centuries ago. By its provisions, every beneficed Clergyman or Curate officiating in the Church of England was required, *on that day*, to give his “assent and consent,” without qualification or reserve, to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer, and thenceforth faithfully to be guided in his ministrations by this book, and by no other,—*they were all to do this*, or by non-compliance, to forfeit for ever their Benefices, and Curacies, and Preferments, and be thus driven ignominiously from the Church.

The warning was short: the alternative terrible: no time

was given for organized co-operation: indecision was useless. The day came; and two thousand of these ministers, simultaneously, and without pre-arrangement—rather than violate their conscientious convictions, and become the thralls of an arbitrary Prelacy—*refused their subscription, and were deprived accordingly*: turned out, without remorse or pity—they and their families—to find shelter where they could, or, failing this, to starve.

This was very ungenerous treatment by educated men of educated men who had been guilty of no crime! But when was Power *generous*? This was very *savage* treatment when we consider their wives and little ones! But when was the roused zeal of clerical bigotry other than *savage*? There *are* instances no doubt, but at this moment I do not remember one. The blow was a *very cruel* one *come whence it might*; but it must have been felt to be the *crueller*, *dealt as it was by brother ministers—members of the same Church*. Perhaps of all enraged things, an enraged Bigot (if in orders) is the most implacable! What is the name of the Master such men serve?

The quarrel had been of long-standing. From the Reformation itself (about a century previously) there had been persons of learning and influence in the Church who disagreed with many of the ordinances and regulations sought to be imposed, by the majority, *on all*. Much persecution had been the result of these differences throughout the long reign of Queen Elizabeth,—much misery and bloodshed! It continued through the reign of the first James, and culminated in that of Charles the first, his despotic son.

During the Civil tempest his tyranny occasioned—which resulted in intestine war, and the deposition and beheading of the King—the Presbyterians (or Puritans as they were called) became the stronger party,—Prelacy was abolished, the Bishops sent adrift, and Presbyterianism became the Religion of the nation.

When “the Lord Protector” of the Commonwealth, Oliver Cromwell, died, civil affairs fell into disorder, and, after a few years of struggle against the re-action that followed, Charles the second, the elder son of the decapitated Monarch, was recalled from the Continent, and restored to the throne of his ancestors. The Bishops were then re-appointed to their Sees; the Prelatical section of the Church became again predominant, and the Act was passed (called the Act of Uniformity) which settled the disputes between Prelacy and Presbyterianism, and drove the 2000 Ministers of the latter party from the Church, as has been already related.

These are the chief points of a very long, and a very painful story. I need not dwell upon the sufferings of the deprived Ministers and their families, or of their exemplary patience and perseverance under the infliction. I need not say that tens of thousands of Laymen renounced the Church of England and became, under various denominations, Non-Conformist or Protestant *Dissenters*, and that most of the deprived Ministers officiated as their pastors. From that time the Non-Conformists have grown into great power and importance, and at present nearly equal in numbers, if they do not actually *out-number*, the members of the Establishment. And from that time, England dates that remarkable

advance in Civil and Religious liberty which distinguishes the nation above all others in the world; and to the noble and unselfish sacrifice made by these persecuted clergymen two centuries ago, we probably owe that insatiable spirit of free enquiry into all subjects which is a characteristic of the age, and which, could they have foreseen, *they* certainly would not have wished-for or commended,—for their sympathies were narrow, and their views illiberal (like their creed), and their principles despotic.

The *pretext* for these severities of the Prelatical party in the Church against their Presbyterian brethren was (as we have seen) to bring about uniformity of religious worship; but their *real* and openly-avowed object was to deprive these innovators of *all power* by driving them beyond the pale of the Establishment. And, whilst we feel much abhorrence of the methods taken to accomplish this purpose, we cannot be much surprised at what they did, nor altogether condemn them for doing it, when we remember that the Presbyterians, some twenty years previously, had driven out the Bishops, imposed similar restrictions on the liberty, and exercised similar authority over the Consciences, of their Prelatical brethren; and would willingly have extended their arbitrary control over other Christians who were *not* Prelatists—over the Independents, the Congregationalists, the Baptists, the Quakers, Unitarians and other Sects—all Separatists from the Establishment, and struggling for independent action beyond the pale of the Church—had they not been restrained by the civil power under Cromwell. This Act, therefore, of the Prelatists (now predominant under the Second Charles) was not only *retributive* but *protective*. They well knew from

past experience that they must *crush* their opponents, or stand in fear of these opponents again gaining the ascendancy, and *crushing them*. For scarcely ever had any body of men been more arbitrary in the exercise of power, when they had it, than these Presbyterians,—none more obstinately determined against all “toleration” towards other sects than they; and had not “the Lord Protector,” Cromwell, during the Commonwealth, restrained them, and obliged them to live in peace, side by side, with all the non-conforming sects of the day, no Prelates, no Popes, that ever existed would have been more oppressively tyrannical than these very men whom the Prelatists, by their Act of Uniformity, had shorn of their power and driven from the Establishment.

The *moral* of the sad tale is this,—These men had sown the wind, and now reaped the whirlwind. They had “bitten and devoured” their religious Brethren, and were now, in their turn, bitten and devoured. “God was not to be mocked.” They had sown persecution, and now reaped, of this same persecution, an abundant harvest. They had given no heed to the Truth so plainly and emphatically set forth by Paul; but the Truth had found them out. If many *pitied* them in their adversity; many also “saw it and were glad.” In these days Cromwell, was the great and unflinching friend of Toleration and Religious Liberty; and the Presbyterians their bitterest and most strenuous opponents.

But my object in this brief survey of the history of Prelatical persecution in 1662 is not so much the *History itself* (full of interest though it is, and *not unmingled with horror*) as for the sake of the great lesson which, with trumpet tongue, it commends to our heads, and hearts, and con-

sciences. All these things were done, my friends, (and greater infamies than I must stop to tell you of) *in the interests of the Christian Religion, and in the name of God!*

Yes, as you well know without one word from me, barbarities that would disgrace a nation of Cannibals have been enacted, all the world over, under the sanction of Religion, and in the name of God! These Presbyterians looked on themselves as God's chosen people, His Elect—whose business on earth was to pray, and preach, and exhort, and catechise, in their homes and churches during *the whole of the Sundays*; and thence, with the viewless "Sword of the Spirit," "to deal damnation round the land on all they called their foes." And on every other day—if need were—to gird on their fleshly thighs the more substantial "Sword of Gideon," and go out against "the Ammonites"—the non-elected "enemies of the Lord"—and smite them hip and thigh, and pursue them even to extermination. Such a mode of Christianity was not only preached by them, but sanctioned by their principles; and when the Civil Government restrained their use of the "Sword of Gideon," they made up for it by using the "Sword of the Spirit" to put to silence all opposition to their views, to exterminate all Religious Liberty but their own, and shut all men's ears to the voice of pity and the prayers for "Toleration."

Nor were the principles and practices of the Prelatists one whit more amiable than theirs. For centuries there had been between the Sects called Christian, only a reciprocity in Hate. The Presbyterians, in their zeal for Religion were loud in their Anathemas against amusements of all sorts, but especially against "stage plays, dancing, and masks,"

and, when Charles the first was King, a zealot of their party—William Prynne, a Barrister, wrote a book against these, and such like ungodly practices, for such they thought them, and Mr. Prynne was prosecuted for publishing this book—was brought to trial and convicted for this, in our eyes, no very grave offence. And *this* was the sentence passed on him, and, in all its hideousness, carried out,—“Mr. Prynne,” said the Earl of Dorset, his judge, “I declare you to be a schism-maker in the Church, a sedition-sower in the Commonwealth, a wolf in sheep’s clothing,—in a word, *Omnium malorum nequissimus* (the sum of all deceitfulness and evil.) I shall fine you £10,000, which is more than you are worth, yet less than you deserve. I will not set you at liberty, no more than a plagued man or a mad dog, who though he can’t bite, can foam. You are so far from being a social soul that you are not a rational soul. You are fit to live in dens with such beasts of prey as wolves and tigers like yourself; therefore I condemn you to perpetual imprisonment; and for corporal punishment, I will have you branded in the forehead, slit in the nose, and have your ears chopped off.” *And all this was done to him*, excepting only the perpetual imprisonment; for he lived to see the suppression of the bishops, and the beheading of the King, and was then, by his friends the Presbyterians, restored to liberty. How true it is, then, my friends, that “Curses, like chickens, come home to roost:” that “God is not mocked;” and that “what we sow we reap!” *Worse* than the religious rule of the primitive Jews—“an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” was the moloch Christianity of those days,—it was *Ruin* for a conscientious opinion,—a *Man’s life* for a venial fault!

Let me ask you, judged of by your own feelings of humanity—*was this Religion?* Of the same stamp (the same in principle) was that of the Independents, and the Baptists, and the other Sects of that day—the Quakers perhaps alone excepted. The same fierce God was believed in; the same exclusive means set forth for all men's justification before God; the same exclusive road (dismal, narrow, thorny, and devoid of beauty) to lead men to salvation! Judged of, then, by your own warm human feelings, I ask, can any of these systems be really systems of Religion? Judged of by the words of Jesus and the spirit of Paul's teaching, we have seen that none of them have within them the humane, and loving, and universal principles of the Religion of Christ. Continue to preach these systems of Religion—"which hold the word of promise to the ear only to break it to the heart" through all eternity,—and the result will be what we see it—wealth and power for the Rich and grasping, and hopeless poverty for the Poor: whilst all the evils that Paul warns us against, and proves to be the natural and inevitable product of such principles, will continue to inundate the world without hope of end, or chance of reformation. The only way out of them is to believe in Paul, and to preach the purifying words of Jesus, that his Religion of Love and Universal Brotherhood may gradually, but surely, supersede the systems which cleave to misdirected human power, and render us all, pleased though we might be with the *name* of Liberty, slaves to the dominion of wrong, and in bondage to the lusts of the flesh and the teachings of Antichrist.

My dear friends, I can do no more in conclusion, than again commend to you the prophetic adjuration and advice

of Paul to the Galatians, "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage." That the 2000 ministers (whose courageous act in letting all go for conscience' sake we to-day commemorate),—that these brave men thoroughly believed in the principles they held, there cannot be a doubt. That they were (for the most part) good men, according to their light, and excellent and zealous Pastors over their flocks, there is ample testimony to prove. And that their devotion to what they believed to be good and right, and their noble *example of giving up all for conscience' sake*, has been of incalculable advantage to the world, must be gratefully acknowledged by every one to whom bravery, and unselfish integrity, and liberty, and progress, are dear. Therefore, whilst judging them, as I have now done, by a test they did not themselves acknowledge, we find them to have been heretics in Religion, fanatics in the propagation of their principles, and most thoroughly opposed to all toleration towards other men's beliefs,—that, judged *by their own principles*, we are bound to award them our approbation, to acknowledge our indebtedness to them, and, by consecrating this day to their memories, to award to them the tribute of our gratitude and honor. And all this I trust we do; and although, in the interests of a higher Truth than *they* recognised, and purer Religion *than they owned*, it has seemed to me good and right to put you in mind of *the whole truth*, that is,—to tell you whence, and by what means, adversity came upon them, as well as how they bore it.

THE UNCHRISTIAN CHARACTER OF RICHES.

“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”—PAUL’S
1ST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY, ch. vi., 8th verse.

IT would not be difficult, I think, under the influence of these words of the apostle to produce a very powerful impression upon a congregation of the very poor. It would, I conceive, be possible, to send them home, if not in love with poverty and wretchedness, at *least* contented with the hardship of their lot. It is the custom when preaching to the Poor to assure them that Poverty is far better for *them* than Riches; and that simple faith in Jesus as the atonement for all sorts of sin is of far more worth than all the showy pageantry and magnificence that comes of worldly gain.

Some few years since, a very populous and uncivilised neighbourhood, in the suburbs of London, called the “Potteries,” was visited by a member of the Episcopal bench, who in true primitive style preached to twelve or fifteen hundred of these poor people *in the open air*. He told them how the second person of the Trinity, while on earth, chose poverty for himself to shew us the blessedness of this condition,—

told them of the needle's-eye-passage through which the rich have to make their perilous, if not impossible, way to Heaven ; whilst for the poor there is no impediment if they will believe in Jesus, put their spare pence in the savings bank, feel thankful that they live in a Christian country, and rest contented with their condition. The good Prelate reminded them that all the Apostles were as poor as Job after his afflictions had come upon him ; and of all they said touching the danger of riches, and of the heavy responsibility his hearers escaped through being poor. I can easily conceive the heavenly state of mind in which the Bishop left them in : I can easily conceive also, what a change would take place in the sentiments of the good Bishop during his drive from the Potteries to the House of Peers ! But, my friends, Truth is one ; and God is its author. Two and two are not eight in one place and four in another ; nor can the same religion be one thing to the Rich and another to the Poor. Truth has no admixture of falsehood in it ; nor can any ingenuity convert the one into the other. What God says to one, He says to all. The Scriptures admonish us that, "having food and raiment," we should "be therewith content."

It is not for us to torture this plain admonition into divers meanings to make it square with the circumstances by which we are surrounded ; but to make the circumstances by which we are surrounded *square with it*. If our Religion be not true, let us renounce it ; but if true, let us do all we can to alter and reform the circumstances which stand in the way of its practical adoption. If the battle with these adverse circumstances is too hard for us, let us, at least, boldly look

the difficulties in the face; admit the Truth into our minds; fearlessly proclaim the Truth; do what we can to make converts thereto; and thus prepare the way for the so-much-needed reformation. *This is my utmost hope.* It is under the influence of this hope I am now asking your attention. "And having food and raiment," says the apostle, "let us therewith be content."

These words are so simple and expressive, and the admonition they enforce on our attention is so plain, that it is only necessary to remind you they are the words of the Apostle Paul, founded on many admonitions to the same effect which fell from the inspired lips of Jesus—who, to the very letter, practised what he taught—to convince you that there is more in this admonition than the world—and especially in this world of England, Christian though it be called, has shewn the slightest disposition even to admit.

The whole chapter, whence our text is taken, is a most positive and emphatic warning—not to say denunciation—against the hoarding up of superfluous wealth. You will not have forgotten this expression of the apostle, "The love of money is the root of all evil." There is so much truth in this axiom of the apostle that it has long since passed into a proverb. What is it that men will not do for money?—the rich that they may be richer; the poor that they may become rich; and the needy that they may avoid starvation? Among individuals, is there any crime, from a simple larceny up to murder—notwithstanding the penalties they incur if detected—that men will not commit for money? And among Nations, what a black catalogue of rapine, murder, treachery, and oppression is there not recorded in the history of the

world, the object of which is—and always has been—Money, or that of which money is the representative!

Have Christian nations been less criminal in these respects, —less lucre-loving, or less unscrupulous in striving to enrich themselves at the expense of their neighbours, than the nations who know nothing about the gospel of Christ? Is there any sect of professing Christians that follow out these admonitions of Jesus and his apostles, and hold riches in contempt? There is but one answer to these questions; and as professed believers in the Bible; as professors of the gospel; as followers of Jesus; as a nation of Christians, to our shame must this answer be recorded.

I am aware there is something to be urged on the other side of the question. It is this: Our love of money, though productive of sin, crime, and wide-spread evil beyond the power of human calculation to compute, is yet productive of incalculable good. It fosters literature, the sciences, and the mechanical and intellectual arts: and also, it fosters the most imposing apology for Religion that money can procure; and, if the *latter* is doing but little for the elevation and enlightenment of the world, the *former* are doing much: And furthermore, be it remembered, that *but* for money as the motive to exertion, the good which even these are doing would not be done at all. This certainly is all true: “and pity ’tis ’tis true:” for the good thus procured is not intended, and the *motive* is a condemnation to us as Christian men.

My dear friends, if human nature were not essentially Good—good at its very core; if God’s laws were not indelibly written by God’s own finger on our souls; if Heaven’s wondrous alchemy were not for ever converting the Evil

which results from our ignorance and free-will into Good; if in opposition to our love of money, and to the so-called Religion that dares not raise its voice against it, God had not placed those purifying and self-executing penalties, which we call punishments, to restrain us in our mad career, this lust for riches would destroy us utterly. Look at the Nations it has destroyed! Look at the men and women it is destroying! Think of the babes unborn it *will* destroy!

Of what use has it been to the world hitherto, that one lone prophetic voice has been echoing adown the ages for three thousand years proclaiming this law of Omnipotence to men—"The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God!" Of what use has it been to the world hitherto, that Jesus declared, "It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God!" Of what use has it been to the world hitherto, that the philosophic Paul, the apostle of Jesus, tells us, with all the emphasis of an earnest mind,—with all the power of genuine inspiration, and with all the authority of the Apostleship, that "They who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition;"—adding thereto, as a reason for all this, that "The love of money is the root of all evil?"

Have we believed Paul? Have we believed Jesus? Have we believed that elder voice, which warns us of the "hell" of suffering which follows, as the night the day, all our violations of the Divine law, and our forgetfulness of God?

Of course I speak not here of *individuals*. I speak of a

national vice; of a system of money-getting to which we are bound hand and foot: and of the *consequences* of that system on ourselves and others. Even in Christian England our *moral* power counts as nothing to our *money* power. With this latter we circumnavigate the world in search of wealth to increase it. We go forth into Earth's fairest regions—not to carry *peace* and *love*;—not to *teach*;—not to *learn*;—*but to obtain dominion; to impoverish other nations*, and to enrich our own. What *tyrants* have we been! What odium have we earned! What bloodshed—what misery have we caused!

Our last “Day of Humiliation” was for a world of sins of this nature committed by us in India; or rather—for the hideous consequences of these sins. At the bidding of our Christian Queen—the head of Christ's church here in England—we acknowledged our forgetfulness of God: we said our prayers. The Church admonished us, and dismissed us with its blessing. The ministers of the Religion of Peace and love did *their* duty,—which was an easy one: We did *ours*—which was easier still: and we are now going on as usual in violation of Heaven's law, forgetful of our immortality; forgetful of God. We are still “making haste to be rich,” and thus falling into temptations and snares, and “into many foolish and hurtful lusts;” and whilst we blindly (or rather, *madly*) “run into destruction and perdition,” the *Churches*, which should preach Christ and his apostles to deter us, are looking on—nay, are vying with us in the race for gain, until another reckoning-day comes. When this arrives, the Churches will again do their duty; will again summon us to the solemn mockery of a Fast and Humiliation; will again persuade us our long account with Heaven

is settled; that Religion is satisfied, and that we are free—free for a fresh start, neck and neck with our Reverend admonishers, in the career of wrong!

These things would be very ludicrous, were they not very solemn. My dear friends, let us reason together. Either Jesus was a mere babbler and his apostles dupes, or these things are hollow, false, and wrong.

If the love of money *is* all Paul affirms it to be—the root of *all* moral evil,—the ever-active cause of sin, degradation, and misery,—if it has a natural tendency to dwarf our souls, benumb our affections, and estrange us from God; then, assuredly, a church, professing to be a church of Christ, ought to wage incessant war against this lust for the riches which bring such a host of evils in their train:—evils not the least of which is this—that the ignorantly pious are thereby led to father the authorship of Evil on an all-wise, an all-beneficent God; or else to assert, that there is a Spirit of Evil in the universe equal in power with God; and that *Omnipotence* is reduced to *Impotence* in the vain but ceaseless struggle for supremacy,—an idea so ignorant and destructive of all principle, that well may those churches that entertain it, be divided and impotent for good; and well may atheism flourish and abound among us, when Popes, and Cardinals, and Bishops, and Deans, and tens of thousands of their beneficed underlings, are content, as an apology for their own helplessness, to hand over a half-dominion of this fair world—to the Devil.

My dear friends, there is no Devil in the universe: but I am told there is one in the Bible: my reply is—Turn him out, he has no business there. The truth of the matter is

this; the meaning of the term in the sacred volume is Vice, or Wickedness: not a person or thing possessing either of these qualities, but the quality itself personified.

We speak of Faith in the same way; and presently the Painter or the Sculptor materializes and personifies the idea: he draws or models a graceful female figure with upturned eyes and folded hands expressive of reverence and unfaltering trust, and calls it Faith.

In the same way the quality we call *evil* or *vice* has been personated and presented to us: only in this case in masculine guise instead of feminine; hideous instead of beautiful; the likeness of a beast rather than a man; to which hoofs, and horns, and other anatomical appendages have been added to complete the very truthful, though monstrous personification. This, my friends, is the history of the Devil, whole and entire: and this history will serve to explain more than one of the miracles (or natural facts recorded in figurative language) in this sacred book. "The love of money," according to Paul, constitutes this Devil, which holds dominion over us, and lives within us, and requires all the spirit of Jesus and his apostles to exorcise him and cast him out.

This "love of money," is indeed the Father of Lies—that unseen thing of evil, which runneth up and down the world in all disguises, seeking whom ne may devour. Children of God, heirs of Immortality, let us keep ourselves pure from this unhallowed influence.

Some of you may probably remember the wreck, off the coast of the United States, of a large steam vessel called "The Central America." There were about 500 people on

board; and treasure computed (in dollars I believe) as two millions. In a severe storm this vessel sprung a leak, and, after a long and heroic struggle by passengers and crew to keep her afloat, went down at night, in deep water, carrying hundreds with her. The newspaper accounts informed us that "The greater portion of the passengers were returned miners (from California): some returning (to New York) to invest the capital they had realised, in the hope of living a life of greater ease, as the result of their industry; and others, to get their families, and once more return to the land of gold. But (continues the account) as the storm continued to rage, *less and less of GOLD was thought of*; and when on Saturday it became evident that they might at any moment be buried beneath the waves, men divested themselves of their treasure-belts, and scattered the gold upon the cabin floors, telling those who would to take it. Full purses containing in some instances 2000 dollars were lying untouched on sofas. Carpet bags were opened by their owners, and the shining metal was poured out on the floor with the prodigality of death's despair. One of the passengers (who was fortunately rescued) opened a bag and dashed about the cabin 20,000 dollars in gold dust, and told him who wanted, to gratify his greed for gold, and take it. But it was passed untouched as the veriest dross. A few hours before *he would have struck down* the man who would have attempted to take a grain of that which he now spurned from him." So says the account. And it teaches us that an hour approaches to all of us when the greediest would no longer raise a barrier betwixt himself and heaven, and barter godliness for gold.

In the last extremity of the sinking ship, help—and as it proved, safety—was near for some. “A brig was descried ere night closed in, and boat after boat, containing the women and children, was with difficulty launched, conveying their tender freight to her from the disabled and sinking ship. Fathers parted with their children, husbands with their wives, with a calmness and resolute resignation, of which none perhaps knew himself to be capable, until that awful but holy hour. There was no noise, no confusion, no exhibition of selfishness; but only a few sacred tears amid the heroism of that moment, when every man on board thought only of saving the women and children, content that this act of love and charity should be his last.”

The last boat gone: the men all left on the wreck: the ship went down; but, says one of the survivors, “no shriek was heard: nothing but the seething rush and hiss of the waters, that closed above her, as she hurried, almost with the speed of an arrow to her ocean grave.”

You see, my dear friends, what a few hours had done in purifying the souls of these rough gold-hunters, enabling them to find out, and rely upon the *manhood* that was in them, and upon *the present God* that, in this solemn hour, was with them on the surging waters.

These are circumstances to try men's souls, as well as to test the value of things of this world, in comparison with the eternal realities of *that*, to which every breath we draw brings us nearer the brink; when certain death is imminent, and none but God is by, there is no *acting*,—no *hypocrisy*,—*we are true to Truth, true to our real nature* THEN!

Now, apart from the question we are considering—the

danger and *nothingness* of wealth,—consider for a moment this scene of the sinking ship. What proof have you here of that stock-in-trade of Priestcraft—“human depravity”? Why did not the strong men save themselves, and leave the helpless women and children to perish? Why, instead of this, *did they* OUTDO *the Christian* precept, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” by loving the women and children better than themselves: and by electing (with death staring them in the face) to yield themselves up, uncomplaining willing sacrifices, that the women and children might be saved? Was this a proof of innate *depravity*? or, that all men have Christ’s loving nature in them, and that the soul of humanity, like its beneficent Creator, is innately *Good*.

Suffer me to digress a few moments longer whilst I adduce another touching proof of this great fact (which every shade of orthodoxy denies)—the innate nobility and goodness of the human soul:—

In a lecture delivered by Grace Greenwood of Boston (U.S.) she relates the following incident which occurred at the burning of a steamer on one of the Western lakes: “Among the few people whose courage and presence of mind rose superior to the perils and horrors of the night, was a mother who succeeded in saving her two children by means of a floating settee. While they were in the water the mother saw a man swimming towards the settee; and as he was about to grasp it she cried ‘Don’t take it away from my poor little children!’ The man made no answer; yet the appeal struck home; for by the light of the flaming vessel she could see that his face was convulsed by the

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struggle between the mighty primal instinct of nature (self-preservation) and something better and holier. It was but for a moment. He threw up his hands with a groan of renunciation; *flung himself backwards, and went down!*"

Let us, my friends, think better of human nature for these proofs of the spirit of goodness working in man, in these solemn moments of his utmost need. When there is no temptation to play the hypocrite—none near him but his God! And let us strive more and more to subvert those mischievous superstitions (whether old or new) which, by degrading humanity, and rendering unlovable its God, leave the bulk of us no alternative but to make Gain our divinity, and Religion (or that which passes for Religion) a pretence.

My friends, when Gold is useless to us, we can afford to be prodigal of our humanity, and to vie with the lowly loving Jesus in acts of unselfish sacrifice, and christian love:—witness in proof of this, the deeds of heroism (which remind us of Calvary) at the foundering of "The Central America"—at the burning of the steamer on the Western Lake! Wealth, on the contrary, especially great wealth—has a natural tendency to deaden the *best feelings of our nature*, without which we are but *gaudily dressed carcases*, and not *women* and *men*. *Were it otherwise*, we should not see some of the meanest of our contemporaries—Lawmakers by birth—in the possession of incomes far exceeding a thousand pounds a day,—something like a pound a minute, a shilling for every third tick of the clock, a groat a tick;—whilst thousands of their fair country-

women, who toil twelve or fifteen hours daily, are starving on the poor pittance of five or six shillings a week.

Notwithstanding the teaching and example of *Jesus*, and the Biblical denunciations against covetousness, and the warnings of the *Apostle* against the moral contaminations of Wealth,—there is (here in “Christian” England) no limit to our unholy accumulations *but death*; and the consequence is, that nearly all who have the opportunity, continue to add treasure to treasure, to join field to field, and house to house, until they grow *lunatic*, absolutely *lunatic of avarice*: or tumble from their counting-houses into their coffin, unworthy to be mentioned in the same category with that nameless but noble soul who renounced his life rather than jeopardise the safety of the children floating on the frail raft where a mother’s love had placed them, beyond the peril of the burning ship!

My friends, these transformations of men into soul-less money grubbers could not be if the good God, who created us with a nature akin to his own, were not hidden from men by SUPERSTITION; and if *mystery* were not made a substitute throughout christendom for the practical and humanising religion of Christ.

If you clearly perceive this, as I do, OUR course is clear:—God’s laws must be loved and revered by us though they cannot be obeyed; and the Human laws which oppose them, though they must needs be obeyed by us, must not be revered and loved. As things are, “having food and raiment” merely, it is impossible that many of us could “be content.” I know it: few better. Men and women with hearts in their bosoms, and children to provide for whom

they love, *cannot* act out the *letter* of the Law of universal benevolence; and yet it is a good Law and it is God's! Nor can any, who have the chance of escaping the condition, be satisfied *with the bondman's or the hireling's portion*—that is, simply to be housed, and clothed, and fed. Yet this proves how *evil these conditions are*; and how good and God-like is the law of universal Love.

If, however, we cannot *practise* the Religion of Jesus, but with ruin to ourselves and children—that is, without accepting the slave's and hireling's condition for ourselves and them,—at least we can openly confess it, preach it, propagate it, and thus do something to subvert these superstitions, and reform the false system of social morality which derives from these superstitions its principal support.

This is easy, but it is nowhere done. The beginning has to be made. The plain truth has to be told. But my friends, *until the beginning has been made by us, and the whole truth told without equivocations, or reserve*, we must take rank among the soul-less “orthodox,”—we must account ourselves as renegades to Jesus, and unprofitable labourers in the vineyard of God. It is not enough to have purer views, and a more rational belief than “orthodoxy” has: we must do what we can to follow them out in practice, and to get them followed out by others, or our *beliefs* and *us* are NAUGHT.

To live in the light of Truth, and yet to walk in the ways of benighted *orthodoxy*, is only—like *the believers* in this orthodoxy—to cry “Lord, Lord,”—and thus ensure for ourselves the greater condemnation. Again, to be solicitous about our own salvation is no more than *selfishness*: but Jesus had no selfishness in his nature; and assuredly *there*

is no selfishness in his religion. Therefore take courage,—put your hands to the work of universal enlightenment and regeneration, and *pursue* it without fear or faltering, without let or stay—nothing doubting but that the God of all Truth will bless and sanctify with His spirit your pious endeavours, —for sure I am, that there is no *loveliness* in life; no *beauty* in the universe; no truth in the deep fond yearnings of the Human Soul, except in the faith that a BENEVOLENT GOD animates the landscape, and spiritualizes the Heaven that lies about us.—*Then* there can be no value in WEALTH, *except for its beneficent* uses; no pleasure in POWER except to dispense blessings with the same impartiality that God's handmaid, Nature, dispenses the solar-light,—spreads out to cheer us, her starry canopy; and drops, morning and evening, her earth-refreshing dews;—No HAPPINESS except in dissipating delusions; upholding Truth and Right; raising the wretched, and conquering evil, by doing good. Could we but *realise* these things in our lives and consciences, *then*, my friends, Religion, which has no self-seeking in it, nor gloom, would be a felicity to us, and tinge everything with beauty, and hallow everything with Love; and we should have laid the foundation for ourselves and others of that Millennium, which the divinest instincts of Humanity speaking through Isaiah and Micah, promised—and is forever promising to our race—that same Millenniary period which Jesus denominated the reign on earth, of Truth and Righteousness—the veritable kingdom of God:—“*Then* shall your light rise in (the surrounding) obscurity, and (even) your darkness *be as the noon-day*,” for “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it:” To Him be all the glory! Amen.

PEACE.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

—Paul's Epistle to the Romans, ch. 12, v. 18.

MY FRIENDS,—Placed in immediate contrast with War, and its immoralities, and its unmercifulness, and its butcheries, what a blessing is Peace!

Before examining, and considering the import, of the Apostle's admonition, let us take a glance at the miserable and unholy state of things implied in this word War.

In its widest and most obvious meaning, it signifies the systematic carnage and desolation caused by fleets and armies—by men, reduced to machines and trained to destruction, who do the bidding of other men in whom the genius of mischief has been cultivated to that perfection which shames every attempt hitherto made, even by Evangelical preachers, to depict the power and malice of that ideal personification and stock-in-trade of theirs—the Devil.

Taking for granted all that has been written and said about this ideal personage,—*his* power of working mischief for mankind is as nothing compared with the devices employed by the admirals who command navies, the generals who lead armies, the inventors who supply the materials and implements of destruction, and the demoniac fury of

the things in human shape who wield them. But, not to do our preachers an injustice, I know they will tell me that it is the devil who *instigates* these dreadful doings.

Well, be it so. It behoves us, then, to unmask this devil, to anatomise him, to see what he is, and learn what he is made of, in order that we might *know* him, and be prepared against him. This we will endeavour to do presently. We will not quarrel about the *name*; but we must endeavour to understand it, and to get a clear conception of the circumstance or thing it stands for. Admitting, then, that the cause of war is the devil, let us see what a misery it is to live under his dominion.

The word war has many phases of meaning besides that which represents armies and navies engaged in the work of carnage and destruction. A few of these will be noticed shortly. For the present I confine myself to this more generally understood meaning of the word.

War, then, is the work of the Devil; it luxuriates in destruction; delights in horrors; it revels in human misery. It has no mercy, no humanity, no conscience. Desolated cities, ruined provinces, devastated villages and farms, are its delight. Fields where cereals grew, and meadows where flocks and herds were pastured (rendered slippery with human gore, and literally covered with the dead and dying) are sights familiar, if not delightful, to the vulture-eye of war. It dreams not of, it cares not for, the wide-spread mourning and misery it produces in the ten thousand homes it renders desolate—many of them never to be happy more! Somewhere or other this demon-work is always going on. Perhaps a million of God's creatures are

sacrificed annually to this Moloch, war. It were easy, my friends, to draw you a finished picture of *War*, with all its horrid details; or to fill folios with descriptions of its dismal consequences. The materials for both might be gathered from the newspapers, which the press—American, and European—has, for years past, been hurrying to these peaceful shores: and every one can, if he please, fill up the outline I have been presenting to you, by collecting these regularly chronicled horrors, and concentrating them into a picture for himself.

But, Peace!—Heaven's fairest issue!—this world's health! Peace! with its gentle mien, and seraph countenance; its joyous hopes; its loving labors; its flocks, and herds, and fruits, and flowers; its own peculiar triumphs, and its plenteousness, requires the bold conception and the delicate hand of an angel-artist—his pencil dipt in sunbeams to delineate truly, and fitly to display its splendours. *I* must not attempt the picture. I mean PEACE as it *might be*: the peace which it is said men enjoyed under Solomon: the peace universal predicted by the prophets: the peace universal which *shall be*—when God's kingdom come.

Well might I leave *unattempted* a task so seductively inviting, yet so impossible.

But Peace *as we know it*,—the peace which belligerent nations must feel so thankful for—a state of things which is merely *not active War*, but only its absence or suspension,—peace which has its cares and fears as well as its pleasures and advantages, though a heavenly state compared with that we have just been contemplating, needs no labored attempt to make us comprehend it, and value it as we ought.



Were we to enumerate the blessings this nation, or rather the educated and well-to-do portion of this nation, enjoys in almost the fulness of perfection, prominent amongst them would be named,—Our right to attain knowledge, and to communicate it, and to worship God each in his own way,—our pleasant intercourse of neighbour with neighbour, friend with friend,—our liberty to find out new ways to be happy by means of the Sciences and Arts—the pleasure to be derived from contemplating the poetry there is in nature, the divinity there is in man, the heaven there is in goodness,—the enjoyment derivable from all natural productions,—the comforts to be gleaned from industry,—the hopes we have from the careful nurture and education of our children,—and all those pleasant streams of mental and material wealth which flow in upon us of themselves through our friendly intercourse with other nations—all of them blessings of a high order (or capable of being made so,)—and all of them enhanced to us, and glorified, and rendered more our own, by that blessing of blessings—Peace. What health is to the body—peace is to the soul. The drum and trumpet that in war sound terror and astonishment, in peace are only soul-inspiring calls to pleasure. War kills men in *health*, and preys on the soundest. Peace reserves her youth and strength and beauty to more loving and more genial offices,—the weak get help,—the ailing, health; and the indigent, food and raiment, and at least the outward show of sympathy. Certainly, however, all these things are *possible* under the auspices, and properly take rank among the advantages, of Peace.

All men—especially those who have any claim to be called *Christian* men—naturally love peace. Even from the world's turbulent infancy, the dream of good men has been of universal peace. David, the warrior-king of Israel, in his more pious and reflective age, longed ardently for (personal) peace; and he said, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then I would flee away and be at rest." Yes, my friends, this scourge of neighbouring nations sighed for peace! It is to be observed, however, (and it is a characteristic of the man) that David's aspirations, like his complainings and his prayers, are chiefly *personal*, and limited to *self*—whilst the only Bible-recorded message from Heaven which, from its worth and universality, looks genuine,—is that of the herald-angels (as told us by the Evangelist Luke) announcing the advent of Christianity—"Glory to God in the highest: goodwill towards men: on earth peace!"

This Peace (as I have already said) is reserved for the reign of Righteousness, when *Truth* shall triumph, and universal man be *Just*. It is the golden chain that binds mankind to Deity: it is the ever-ascending spiral stair between earth and heaven: it leads us slowly, but surely, and pleasantly, along Truth's milky-way (still brightening as we ascend), and ushers us with music to the presence of Divinity, where all celestial blessings are heaped and strewed about us. More nobly humane than David were Judah's and Israel's prophets. *They* desired universal peace for universal humanity, and foretold that it would come; and the good Jesus of Nazareth pointed out the way. Nevertheless, it is long in coming! And cannot the teachers in

our Israel, cannot the preachers of Christendom tell us *why*? Cannot they tell us how it happens that America, and, still more recently, one of the fairest portions of Europe, have undergone all the throes and agonies of war? Yes, they say, it is the old enemy, the arch fiend, the serpent, Sin—in other words, the Devil, that is the instigator and perpetuator of all this dreadful work. But does this enlighten you? We have read in the Holy Book how everything was *made* that *was* made; how everything was *created* that *was* created; and God saw that it was very good. We hear nothing of the creation of the devil. The fact is, he slipped into the world *by means of a metaphor*, and has been an unsubstantial reality among us ever since. I have promised to unmask this monster, and shew you what it is.

Men are ingenious creatures: they can build cities, make roads, construct ships, carve statues, write poems, convert the mute and senseless air into thrilling music, and the lightning, filched from the clouds, into messengers a thousand times fleetier than an arrow's flight. They are chemists, and can analyse and compound. They are agriculturalists, and can plough and sow, and gather the earth's produce, and know how to economize the fertility of the soil. Full of evidences is the world of what mankind *can* do. But this he cannot do: Give him the materials, and he cannot make a cabbage, or a bean, or a pea, or a grain of wheat, or a blade of grass, the chemistry by which these are made is God's: prior to man's ingenuity, and apart from it, are these,—nay, his very life, and all he reckons his, *depend* on these—for that same mysterious chemistry

of Heaven, by which these things had their being, goes on in his own body, without any aid of his,—they become a part of himself (indeed the whole of himself which is ponderable or visible,) converted by the same inconceivable alchemy that formed them in the earth into flesh, and tissue, and bones, and brain, and blood. Now, the alembic Earth is, as the Scriptures tell us, God's—the chemic power therein, and all its products, God's. It is indeed, no figure of speech—no fanciful mode of expression to say, as the Scriptures say, "The Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." And this Sovereign Lord of the earth is also—and He has graciously permitted us to know it—the Sovereign Father of men; and for men to own, in any sense, any other sovereign,—to acknowledge allegiance to any creature or thing so called, is rank idolatry; whilst to forget our allegiance to Him, or to renounce it (as so many of us in our words, or thoughts, or actions, do) would be treason in us if it were not the result of mental blindness and the saddest folly. It is the *fool* who hath said in his heart—'There is no God;' but it is the *hypocrite*, the *lip-religionist* who *dishonors* Him. And facts, of which the history of each day is full, concur in telling us that this folly, this hypocrisy, are wide-spread evils—almost universal ones.

Now if we have not *found* Satan, we are close upon his track. If men truly believed in God, they would be *just* to one another; and if men were universally just to one another, there would be no war. There would be goodwill among men; on earth there would be peace; and the most high God would be glorified by His creatures. It is, immediately or remotely, about the possession of the earth,

and the division of the fruits of it—forgetful of whose they are, and that every child of God brings with him an inheritor's claim to a portion of them—that men quarrel; and as long as selfish Injustice presides over this division, there must be *Want* somewhere,—there must be *Crime*,—there must be *discontent*; and *hatred*, and *malice*, and *all uncharitableness*,—and, in some form or other, there must be WAR.

We need not, then, fathom an imaginary hell to find an *imaginary* Devil: a *real one* has his abode among us. The Satan that robs the world of peace, and instigates and fosters war, is Selfishness. This is our old enemy that walks the earth, and brings misery into it, and desolates it,—that prowls about like a roaring lion, or, stealthily, like the wolf, seeking whom he may devour.

An unfair division of the fruits of the earth has naturally and necessarily resulted in an unfair division of Intelligence, and talent, and all other mental and spiritual endowments; so much so, that the majority of our fellow creatures are little else than human animals, fitted only (in that degraded state which is no fault of theirs, but only their misfortune) *to be slaves and drudges to the rest*. They are thus, and only thus, "*inferiors*"; abject, helpless, and in need of everything. Such men cannot govern themselves: they must be governed; and their better educated and better-provisioned "*superiors*" must govern them. To men in divers unequal conditions, the laws cannot be equal. They are everywhere so named, but they are nowhere so in reality.

Religion, even the religion of the Christian Gospels, must be modified, misinterpreted—in short, falsified, to suit

these unnatural man-made conditions. There is no natural instinct of humanity more cultivatable than that animal instinct—Selfishness: and there is no power (for, when educated, it becomes a power) more fit to govern, in such a state of things, than this same SELFISHNESS. It is, however, only *Animal power*, strengthened and sharpened for evil-doing and mischief by its slave (which ought to be its master) the cultivated Intellect. The spirit of the Gospels wages incessant war with it; and the Apostles do nearly all that men can do to repress it, and warn mankind against it. Still it flourishes, and holds imperial sway among us; and as the propagation of Religion, or what passes under the name of religion, necessarily falls to the Ruling classes, the spirit of the Gospels is (and quite *naturally* so under the circumstances) warped, and the very *letter* of them twisted, ignored, and perverted, so as to uphold what *is*—instead of being preached in their integrity, so as to bring about what *ought to be*. We are told that everything in the Gospels is to be understood, not *literally*, but “*spiritually*,” that we are to love our neighbour—spiritually; that we are to do unto others as we would have others do to us—spiritually; that we are to be just in all our dealings and relations with one another—spiritually; that we are to be good Samaritans—spiritually; that we are to be “merciful,” to be “pure in heart,” to be “peacemakers”—spiritually; that we are to keep inviolate the “ten commandments”—spiritually; that we are to be crimeless and “perfect even as our Heavenly Father is perfect”—spiritually; that Religion consists in *sentiment*, and not in *action*; that it is a something which a man can shut up in his bosom, and need not exhibit

—except in ceremonious observances in church or chapel; and in as much scripture-reading, and hymning, and praying, and subscription-giving for the propagation of the Gospel as he (from money-getting) can spare the time and means for. We are taught that (*AS men and women*), *Sin and Evil-doing are matters of course with us*; but that we are to be saved from the consequences of this sin and evil-doing *by a vicarious punishment*: that is, we may sin to our heart's content *in our own proper persons*, and for our own personal pleasure and advantage, but that we might, if we like, be punished *by deputy*. We need not take the trouble to *reform ourselves*: before we were born our penalty was paid!

God-mocking and irrational as this belief is, it was, and still is, *necessary* that men should believe it, in order that the mass of our fellow-men, who have been thus cheated and degraded, should *be governed, and that those who govern* might have some *plea* for the continuance of an injustice which scarcely admits of amelioration, and renders almost hopeless all idea of reform.

Yes, my friends, this perversion of the Christian Gospels was, and is, *necessary* to enable this Satan Selfishness to govern mankind for its own advantage,—shifting as far as possible, the miseries which flow out of the System on the voiceless multitude; but, to make the world what it might be, and ought to be, is no part of the duty which imperial selfishness has taken upon itself to perform.

This must be the gradual work of a reformation in religion—a searching and a total reformation; and then the Poor will get educated in true Gospel principles, and men will, *by preference*, be JUST.

The state of things *now* is much the same as it was in Paul's day, and as Jesus found it during his short intercourse with the world, except that, since the Apostolic period, the Devil has taken to Commerce, and has got ten times richer than ever he was before; and is, withal, more learned, more crafty, more powerful and despotic. Truth has the same old enemy as of yore; and this enemy has spies and interested adherents everywhere; and hence the peculiar form in which the admonition in our text comes to us. Paul says to the Romans (whom riches had more heathenised than their heathen creed) "*If it be possible*, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Yes, if it be possible, for it is not always possible, and I know of no means of making it possible, or of rendering such a possibility permanent other than by disseminating, in all directions, just notions concerning that Gospel truth which means "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; and good-will towards all men," by which alone, as it seems to me, this busy instigator of mischief, this Satan—the disturber of the world's peace—can be exorcised, and driven out from among us.

• The phases of War are many. The newspapers which bring us graphic descriptions of the doings of hostile fleets and armies, and of the scenes of carnage, both by sea and land, which they occasion, acquaint us also with the internal Social war which (though not called war) is *always* going on among ourselves and other nations. Of this kind of warfare, that which is levied on our pockets and our health by means of spurious food, and spurious drugs, and spurious physicians, and spurious everything which human ingenuity

can personify or adulterate—if not the most criminal and injurious—passes as the most “respectable.” Here, as in the other kind of war, the Satan which cares only for *Self and family*, is the unseen contriver and perpetrator of the robbery thus effected and the mischief done. Another kind of social war—that is, in the method of it, though the same in some of its consequences—is that which is carried on by the pilferers, great and small, who resort to violent or crafty means to despoil us of our property, and, when detected, are kept, at the public expense, in penal-settlements, or penitentiaries, or reformatories, or in jails: of course the undetected are marauders still. Of these we live in constant fear; and against their midnight incursions, we hide away all our portable valuables, and bar, and bolt, and double-lock our doors. We know what the burglar *wants*, if we do not know how he came to be the thing he *is*. Generally, the thief is a social waif—*born so*: at nature’s plenteous table there was no welcome, and no place for him: he was rejected even in his infancy, but not drowned as superfluous puppies and kittens are: perhaps he was a pretty baby: perhaps an ill-favored one, with the wrong and misery of generations visible in his baby features, and “thief” written in hieroglyphic characters among the convolutions of his brain. Well: this is all *Man’s work*; and the Injustice involved therein—which is nobody’s in particular—comes back to all of us as members of the body-politic in the guise of violence and danger of some sort—thievery, burglary, assassination. And this is War: and for its existence, the *Satan* that infests society—the general SELFISHNESS which is the cause of these things—is *respon-*

sible. "There is no peace for the wicked, saith the Lord." And if Society is wicked, the individuals that make up society are not innocent; nor is it "possible" for any who reflect on these things to enjoy that repose of conscience—that tranquillity of the soul—which is Peace.

Again, my friends, we—like other nations said to be civilised—have a standing army of policemen, kept up and paid for by the public as much for political purposes as for the detection of criminals and the repression of crime. They have their truncheons for perambulating duty; their fire-arms for special duty; they have their commanders; they are trained like soldiers, and are always ready to contend with the disorderly, and to suppress any internal strife. The contented, well-to-do, and the peaceably-inclined, look up to them for security and protection. Men with grievances to be redressed regard them as enemies. Now what is all this but *war in abeyance*?—IT IS NOT PEACE.

Were the world *at peace*, or (as Owen Feltham expresses it) "if men knew rightly how to value peace, *as* is the empyreal Heaven, *this lower world might be*." "The richest wines (he says), the choicest viands, by *sickness* prove insipid; the silk does lose its softness, the silver its bright hue, and the gold its pleasing yellow. As the *sense of feeling* is the ground of all the rest, and as active life does cease when that is lost, so is *health* the foundation of felicities, and the want of it—joy's privation. yet it is Peace that gives them taste and relish, and affords the sweet enjoyment of all that can be procured." Perhaps the state of things which is most like Peace, and where to live peaceably with all men is more *possible* than

with us, is that enjoyed by the pastoral dwellers in scenes far away from the contamination of great cities, and their many and various temptations to do the things we should not. To such, more than to us in towns, God speaks through peaceful nature. The outstretched landscape, green and undulating, teeming with fruitfulness and plenty, is suggestive to them of Peace! The wide, all-circling canopy of blue that sleeps above them, filled with soft light, and flecked with silvery clouds that bask in sunshine, and seem—half dreaming and half contemplative—to be idly gazing on the fair scene below them, speak to their souls of Peace! The fields, the woods, the pasture-lands, the orchards, gardens, homesteads, large and little—each in some nook of beauty; the cattle ruminating in the shade, the social sheep that graze in company, the all-pervading noiselessness of nature, unbroken save with music—all tell the sweet tale, and enforce the pleasing sentiment of Peace! In such scenes, where there is room for the soul to range and gaze about, daily and nightly we are reminded of that great saying of the Psalmist, “The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.”

My friends, the admonition contained in our text,—“As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,” is an admonition which I think and hope I need not enlarge upon with a view to the edification of any here. For this reason I have chosen rather to dwell on the preliminary clause of the selected sentence,—“If it be possible;” for, at first

sight, these words might seem to be superfluous,—instead of which we see they are full of meaning, pointing as they do to the great impediments which human selfishness places in the way of sound morals, true religion, and real happiness, even among Christian people,—impediments to Peace and peaceful living which all true Christians must wish to see removed. To this end,—simply putting you in mind of the Christian duties of patience and forbearance in all our neighbourly and domestic relations with one another,—the duty of avoiding all occasions of offence to others, and regarding the conduct of others to us, the obligation we are under as Christians of overlooking many things, and judging charitably concerning all,—simply naming these obvious duties to you as enjoined on us by the Apostle in our text, I return to the more important subject—the vice which desolates provinces, brutalizes the human family, and destroys the peace of the world. This vice (as I trust I have proved to you) is that *Selfishness*, that grasping desire for wealth, that love of power and enforced dominion, which, educate it as you will, can never be *just*.

This love of power is, however, *contagious*, and the mass of men, as they get enlightenment, are, more or less, everywhere, beginning to put in their claim for a share of it; and this, sometime, if the struggle (which is a species of social war) go on, *must end* in a general recognition of that natural justice, and a nearer approach to that equality of rank and condition, for which God so evidently designed mankind. As we read in the first chapter of Genesis, God gave dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the

earth—to the *Race*, and not to any specially privileged *portion* of the race: “Male and female created He them” (and this is the only distinction)—not lord and vassal, proprietor and serf, master and slave. These distinctions are *arbitrary*, entirely man-made, and ought not to be, and *will not* be, *perpetual*. For my own part, I could wish any movement, which has this tendency, success, could I hope that the spirit which rebels at these distinctions, and the sufferings they occasion, is not equally tainted with the selfishness of those who desire to render them perpetual. I much fear the reverse of this; nay, it is almost impossible it should be otherwise. I am therefore the more anxious for the spread of true religion, of genuine Christianity, among the laboring population, as a preparation for any change of this kind that might be impending over us, and which, without this preparation, might be productive of the most fearful consequences,—blood, and not blessings,—war, and not peace,—violence and might triumphant, and all progress and real reformation indefinitely postponed.

It is not easy to pass out of long-established wrong into right; nor can the change be made without danger. To degrade, to brutalize and enslave mankind is easy enough; but to enfranchise, to alter their modes of thought, and make civilized and moral men of them, is quite another matter. Any change of this kind, on a large scale, should be ushered in by the Schoolmaster and Christian Teacher; and the Christianity taught by them should be—not that which is adulterated and perverted to suit the governing requirements of a privileged and necessarily selfish Few, but the genuine Gospel which is suited to the needs of all where *all* have

rights as well as *duties*, and all participate equally in a government by all, and for the *benefit* of all. For this purpose it is quite certain that a spurious Christianity will not do; and it is equally certain, alas! that teachers of an unperverted Gospel are at present hard to find. In the godless and religionless materialism of Science, and in "Philosophy," falsely so-called, I have no faith; nor in the absurd beliefs, and symbolisms, and miracle-mongering of Rome, or Geneva—or in any of their offshoots or sects. What hope I have for the propagation of a purer Christianity among us is centered in a Rational Church, whose members (if not hampered by apprehensions of the Social consequences of doing right) shall be free to take the Gospel of Jesus, as Jesus preached it, and with it do *something* (and I will fain hope *much*) towards the reformation of Religion and the happiness of mankind.

I now again express the hope that the small band of Christians may gather strength by united action, and do all it can do to stay the current of godlessness,—to dethrone the devil *Selfishness*, and to teach all to be religiously, morally, socially, and politically JUST,—so that the present brother-robbing, soul-withering, heaven-mocking state of things we have been reviewing may for ever cease, and we may yet transmit a paradise to our posterity, and climb the while the spiral path of Righteousness that leads to our most permanent spiritual home above. In the words of the Apostle, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for Peace, and things wherewith we may edify one another." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." And, "Now the God of Peace be with you all."

RELIGION CONSISTS IN ACTION.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven.”—MATTHEW vii. 21.

TO the dwellers in Towns, to an inhabitant of such a mighty Babel of brick, and stone, and smoke and noise, as London is, the sweet serenity of a sylvan village, with its single street and unpretending architecture, surrounded by the greenery of the hills; its church, some centuries old, round which the ivy clammers; its cottages, its farms, its fields of waving corn, its meadows where the kine are pastured; its gardens, its fresh and fragrant air, its smiling homes, and happy hospitable faces—to him it seems an earthly Eden where it were good to dream away existence, “the great world forgetting; by the great world forgot.” To him it seems the home of innocence where crime, and passion, and licentiousness—like weeds in a well-tended garden—find no room and have no leave to dwell; but only *virtues*, of which, in gardens, the symbols are the flowers,—the Lily without spot or stain; the unpretending Daisy, no less beautiful; and Roses, white and red,—lovely even in ruins, and sweet in death! To such a visitant of a peaceful scene like this (when placed in sudden contrast

with the whirl and bustle of the world's great mart) such thoughts would come in all their vividness: but if the stranger had made mankind his study, he would know the picture he had drawn to be—in *part* at least—fallacious. He would know that human life is everywhere “a mingled yarn, good and ill together;” that “our virtues would be proud if our faults whipped them not;” and that “our vices would despair if not cherished by our virtues.” He would know that happiness and peace reside *within* a man, and not outside of him. He would know that Virtue and noble aims can make for themselves a paradise in the garrets and cellars of a crowded city; and Vice and Licentiousness a hell amid the fairest scenes of nature.

But even after all these deductions had been fairly made, he would be ready to exclaim with the poet—“God made the country and man made the town;” and if he had a tinge of Poetry (which is seldom unallied to piety) *in his own nature*, he would peradventure still sigh, if not for

“A lodge in some vast wilderness”

where he could play the ascetic, at least, for a secure and peaceful retirement amid the comparative virtue to be found in a village home, whence, from a safe distance, he could peep at the great world; hear the roar she sends through all her gates, and tremble not; “see the stir of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd.” I am not about to blame our supposititious stranger for his choice. My natural *sympathies* are almost wholly with him. Still there is something of the coward in all this. Whilst there is sin in the world, or grievous oppression, or giant wrong, it is pusillanimous in a man to avoid all contact with it. Whilst there is evil in the

world to conquer, we are false to our manhood not to grapple with the monster, and try a fall with him, even though we were sure of being worsted in the conflict. Hence I feel that *Christian men* who, though dwellers in rural villages, and in the secluded homes which dot the smiling landscape, giving assurance—by the beauty that surrounds them, the good influences they feel, the few temptations they are subject to,—that piety, and passive virtue, and peace and love, and innocence, are largely theirs,—cannot, therefore, innocently seclude themselves, and hold themselves aloof from the evils which exist at what they may feel to be *a safe distance from themselves*; doing so, too, under the erroneous impression that, because the moral contamination is far away, *it is no concern of theirs*. Nothing can be more erroneous; for whatever taints the body-politic, taints, and disgraces, and reacts on them. Nor can anything be more opposed to the pure spirit of Christianity; for the true and faithful followers of Jesus live not for themselves, but for each other, and for the whole of humanity,—for their kindred, their neighbours, their countrymen, for their brethren—whether white or black—throughout the world.—Whilst there are monstrous evils to remedy—evils which hinder the development (slow at best) of the Religion of Love amongst the family of men—it is not only a disgraceful reflection on our courage and humanity to stand aloof, but we deservedly bring ourselves within the denunciation contained in our text; for what is it but contenting ourselves with *virtually* exclaiming “Lord, Lord,” in the false expectation that this is enough to place us within the pale of God’s Kingdom, instead of, by valiantly battling with Evil for the

benefit of our weaker brethren, and by thus doing the will of God, rendering ourselves *worthy* of the promised kingdom.

To this end I now purpose to direct your minds to some of the Wrongs and Crimes and Immoralities, which *Law* propagates and cherishes, but which only *Love* can cure. There is a great mass of *Ignorance* all around us to be removed. There is crime to be converted. There is *Atheism* to be rooted out. There is Christ's *Religion* to be taught in its simplicity, and reduced to practice. There are duties manifold in number, and mighty in amount, none of which can we neglect and remain innocent and blameless in the sight of God.

Monks and Nuns may shut themselves up in cells and monasteries if they will, and fancy that by fleeing from temptation, and thus abandoning the post of Duty and Trial—they preserve their innocence! Fatal mistake! This, however, is like many other of the easy devices and over-cunning methods for getting safe to Heaven to which countless multitudes of men and women habitually resort. The Churches, one and all, allow it: nay, more, it is the method which *Theology* everywhere prescribes, and which Christians of all sects and denominations—and orthodoxy of every shade—*find it convenient to practice!* It is easy to say—pleasant no doubt to feel—"My Saviour died for me!" It is easy enough on that one day of the week—when it is held illegal to work, and not decorous or respectable to enjoy oneself, or to *do* ought else—to call on the name of *Jesus* and relieve ourselves of the sins of the past week by complacently making a virtue of throwing them all on him! But this is



not Christianity as taught by Jesus of Nazareth. This is not the genuine Christianity of the genuine Gospel.—Nothing can be plainer than the words of Jesus—the words of our text:—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven." Nothing can be plainer than these words; nothing can be more reasonable. Indeed, that he might not leave the matter in any way doubtful, Jesus immediately illustrates his meaning in these words, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not *prophesied* in thy name?—and in thy name have cast out devils?—and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, *I* never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity."

But this is not all: let us see what else it is in which *genuine* Christianity does *not* consist. Read Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and we shall see that it does not consist in ostentatious almsgiving: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the synagogues and in the streets that they may have glory of men: but when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."—It is clear, therefore, that even acts of benevolence, acts of beneficence, if done with a self-seeking motive, are acts altogether inconsistent with genuine Christianity. Again, it does not consist in Public Prayer: for we read: "When thou prayest thou shalt not be as the Hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into

thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. And when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him."

Yet, notwithstanding these injunctions of Jesus to his Disciples, and through them to *us*—injunctions which are as plain as unambiguous words can render them—and which, moreover, are as rational as they are plain,—notwithstanding these injunctions of Jesus (who preferred privacy for his prayer) there is no notion more current among nearly every denomination of Christians—and certainly none more erroneous—than that Religion consists mainly in *public prayer*. Indeed it is lamentable to think to what profane uses this privilege of inter-communion with God is frequently and habitually applied, and by what extravagances of maddened fervour and profane familiarity it is very generally characterized.

To enumerate all the practices and vain things which make no part of genuine Christianity would detain us too long, besides being—as I hope and believe—altogether needless, as matters of instruction *here*. Suffice it to say, that the Religion of Jesus does not consist in mere *forms*, and shows, and ceremonies, nor in Calvinistic rantings, Apocalyptic prophesying, however sincere; nor in exorcising "Devils," nor in many other "wonderful works" which are always being done in Christ's name, and never more than *now*: in brief, that it does not consist in pharisaical

sanctimoniousness or hypocritical pretences of any character or kind; but, on the contrary—as every student of the *Life* of Jesus, and every reader of *his Gospel* KNOWS, in acts of *Duty and of Love*—of Love to God, and of unselfish, willing duty to our brethren and sisters throughout the world. No! there must be no shams and pretences in our privileged intercourse with our all-seeing and all-gracious Father; there must be no hiding from the world, no shrinking from Duty (or, if need be, from Sacrifice) in our intercourse with men.

There are many difficulties in our path of Duty; many obstacles to christian progress to vanquish, which *we* shall never see broken down. But this fact affords no reason for despair; no occasion for despondency; no subject for gloom. To immortal beings, as to God, a day is as a thousand years and a thousand years but as one day: we must, nevertheless, battle with the difficulties if we would be faithful followers and disciples of him who came into the world to teach us by what means they can all be vanquished, and that the Law of all true progress is to be found in his Religion of Love. He, like a true general, bids us go on under his all-conquering guidance without fear or faltering; and enheartens us in our allegiance to Duty and to him in these noble words, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for *theirs* is the Kingdom of Heaven.” “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of Evil against you *falsely* for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” His Religion, in its simplicity, as

he himself enunciated it, must go on "conquering and to conquer" until all moral Evil shall have been subdued, and until Ignorance and Superstition and Wrong, and all unrighteousness shall have been overthrown.

The brief limits to which these discourses are restricted prevent me from entering more fully into the subject of the new nature of the Christian's difficulties in the present day, arising as they do, out of the *material* progress of mankind in science, commerce, the facilities of intercommunion between nation and nation, and the indefinite accumulation of what is called wealth—enjoyable and disposable wealth. All I can do on the present occasion, is, in illustration of the text now under our consideration, briefly to shadow forth the enormous amount of *work* which—notwithstanding our progress in material well-doing—not to say in *consequence* of this progress—*remains for Christian pioneers to do*, if they would lay the *broad* foundation of the Church of Christ in all its beautiful simplicity among us, and thereby entitle themselves to be forever ranked among the daily Doers of the will of God, and escape the condemnation enunciated in our text against lip worshippers, seventh-day Christians, Ceremonialists, and mere Pretenders to the Apostleship. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles: by their fruits ye shall know them!"

First and foremost, there is the Education of the entire people of this nation, and thereafter every nation. I *must* be *brief*: By the word *Education* I mean what is commonly understood thereby. There is a higher and holier meaning, if we consider the highest and the holiest *End* of which Education might be made the means: but this, with any

distinctness cannot be even alluded to now. Let this suffice—if there be any good derivable from Education for some amongst us,—anything capable of making us better Christians and happier men, it must be equally good, and equally needful for *all*. Now, which of us can say, with a clear Conscience, I have done, and am still doing, my best, to educate those about me who have no apparent means of educating themselves, or of obtaining even the commonest rudiments of an education at any school? Let each of us put these questions to himself. Have I done, and am I doing, my best to educate my kindred? my children? my parents? my brothers and sisters? my man-servant? my maid-servant? or, if myself a servant, my fellow-servant? nay, have I even done my best to educate myself?

Those who cannot answer these questions in the affirmative must in no wise presume to account themselves faithful followers of Jesus.

Those who have never thought it their *duty* so to do—a duty to their neighbour, and a duty to God—have yet to learn what Christ's Religion *is*; to learn also that it is no light thing in these days to be a worthy disciple of such a large-hearted exemplar.

Those who acknowledge all this as their duty, but have yet neglected it, will but ill excuse themselves by pleading want of ability—want of means—want of books—want of time: because the true excuse will be, in almost every case, *want of will*; for, with the will would come the time, and the books, and the means, and the ability. They would thus confer large blessings on others; but (even without expecting it) still larger on themselves; for a god-like act

has *in it* God's best reward—an approving conscience, and greatly extended powers. But not to dwell longer on this subject, Education is a mighty work; and he has small claims to be accounted *Christian*, who does not willingly and heartily put his hand thereto. Let it be remembered also that it is not *national* work, but *personal*. It properly belongs to the *individuals* of a nation, and not to the ruling powers or *Government* thereof. Better a national or Governmental Education than none. *Better still*, that a nation should be educated *by itself*. But, *best of all*, that, in addition to *self*, or *social*, Education, *its object* should be, not wealth, but Religion; and *that* Religion the Religion of Jesus, taught in its all-embracing breadth of design and its *practical*, no less than beautiful, simplicity.

A large portion of our nation is *untaught*: another large portion is *ill-taught*: the *object* or *end* of Education—Wealth—is not a *high* one: the *consequences* are *Crime*, which darkens the land; *Intemperance*, which defiles it; and *Irreligion*, which *cherishes both*.

How to diminish, how to eradicate, *Crime* is one of the unsolved problems of our day. We have glanced at its *causes*. Let us see what *props it up*. Suppose for a moment that to-morrow God should work a miracle in our nation, and Crime among us, and all wrong-doing, should thenceforward cease—other things remaining as they are! Think of the consternation that would ensue among a hundred thousand individuals (many of them the lights and glories of the land) on perceiving the ruin that must follow the loss of pay and perquisites they were wont to extract out of our Nation's Crime! Many of them would as soon an earth-

quake should have swallowed them, as that this should be! Can these men, and their families and connexions, who are so busily engaged in *punishing criminals*, desire, think you, *to abolish Crime*? And, if not, is it any wonder that Crime maintains its ground in spite of all *their* efforts to suppress it? This question is worth a thought, and so I leave it with you.

But let us go back to the question. How is it possible, without a miracle, to eradicate Crime, or rather to *minimise* it in the nation?

It keeps *increasing* under punishments and law: it is scarcely likely that *petting* it and *pampering* it, and treating it five times as well as you treat honest poverty, will cause it to decline; but these are the only methods thought of. The Law is a failure! Why not try the Gospel? This, like Education, belongs properly to *individuals* rather than to *Governments*. When Jesus was asked—"How many times shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?—until seven times?" You know that Jesus answered "Yea, until seventy-times seven!" What is our plan and practice under the solemn sanction of the Churches? For a little wrong (which it would repay us ten-fold in soul-felt happiness to forgive) we take instant revenge, and blazon the wrong-doer's fault among his fellows—engendering fiendish feelings in him; and, for the fault of a moment, ruining him for life!—for—of all punishment—a public disgrace is the heaviest, and one which almost precludes the possibility of a return for him whom our unjust "Justice" has thus condemned to—perhaps, perpetual degradation!

Forgetting the Law of Love, and Mercy, and Forbearance,

we have thus defrauded ourselves of a lasting happiness, and *made a Criminal*—which *only Death shall unmake!* Again, if a weaker sister fall away (through another's baseness, it may be) from the strict line of rectitude and virtue, for her there is absolutely no forgiveness, no return! The self-righteousness of her more fortunate, but not always less erring, Sisters, forbid it utterly! Oh! how little we know of Jesus! or, how wicked and shallow the pretence we make of "following" him!

Intemperance, again, is not a Government question, but the people's own. Why should the Government, why should the men of influence and property, wish to get rid of Intemperance? Intemperance pays about two-thirds of all the taxes of the State! What would the Government do without Intemperance? Again, Luxury and extravagant expenditure are necessary to Trade; and without Trade the Poor, temperate and intemperate, would starve! Thus you see, my Christian friends, how hard it is to put in practice Christ's Religion; and how hopeless, without it, and in its simple purity, for the mass of men to do anything more than make a hypocritical *profession* of it, *and let its substance go!* It follows that the mass of men—the bulk of the nation, have no Religion worthy of the name: hence Atheism open and avowed, and what is scarcely to be deemed better than Atheism—that phase of unbelief which admits a God to pray to and to swear by, but denies him in habitual disobedience to His Laws. The great majority of the labouring poor are unprovided with a church. I speak more particularly of the manufacturing districts and large towns. The great majority of them have no Religion. Atheism, open and avowed, is

rife among them. Rather than believe in a jumble of absurdities, partly heathen, partly christian; more material than spiritual—more human than divine—which the Theologians of Christendom have moulded into an abnormous entity, and miscalled a God,—rather than believe in such an irrational absurdity, these men prefer the honester alternative of denying His existence altogether, and of holding themselves aloof from a form of worship akin thereto; and *which* instead of rational worship, would (could ignorance blaspheme) be blasphemy.

No marvel that Atheism, open and avowed, is rife in populous towns where workmen meet in crowds. No marvel that practical Atheism shows its double front in all our political and social doings; no marvel that fraudulent adulterations and dishonesty are becoming the rule in Trade; no marvel that side by side with fabulous wealth crouch Want, and moral filth, and Abjectness and Misery; no marvel that gigantic Crime, is growing scientific; no marvel that honest Labour often languishes for bread; that it is criminal to be poor; that the aged Pauper wears a degrading badge; no marvel that the people still pine in ignorance, and that scores of thousands of homeless children run wild in the savage social wildernesses of our large towns, untaught, unloved, uncared-for—"With none to bless them, none whom they can bless."

All this, though sad, is natural when wide-spread Atheism looking around on the beauteous landscape and star-spangled sky, tells us unblushingly there is no God: all this, though eminently sad, is *natural* when covert Atheism—the Atheism which goes to church, sings psalms, and prays—*holds in its*

hands the destinies of States,—the Churches looking on the while approvingly.

Seeing all this ourselves, we need no messenger from the spirit-world to come and tell us that (if Christ is our guide and his Gospel true) the authors and approvers of this state of things are but crying, "Lord, Lord," instead of *doing* the will of him who instructs us *all* to love our neighbour as we love ourselves, if, with him, we would be partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Are there no Peters, and Andrews, and James's and Johns amongst us to leave mending their nets, and in a cause like this manfully—and with a determination that nothing human could hinder or subdue—set about the holy and delight-affording labour of converting these Atheist millions to a belief in God; and at the same time of giving them (what every soul among them *must* have frequent yearnings after) a *Religion* of which the externals of worship should be at once untainted by sanctimoniousness—touching, simple, and thence, beautiful, reasonable, and fit; but of which the practical essentials should be Christ's doctrine of Love,—his *Life* the model, and his *Words* the text.

Within our own land there are millions of men (*poor* men who will only be converted by poor men) who have no God; no church; no hope (without which life were a mockery, and this beautiful Earth a tomb!)—*no hope of Heaven!*—of a Heaven to be *commenced* in this world, and continued for ever and for ever in the spirit-world beyond.

These men, and their wives, and little ones, have none of these; they lack them all; and the Churches of England, could (if they were not blind) give to them all—thus enlarg-

ing a hundred fold the sphere of their usefulness, to say nothing of the general Reformation of Religion in this our England and its dependencies throughout the world which must necessarily follow; and of that reign of political and social justice which good men sigh for, and the Gospel promises to all!

It is for these blessings (not else obtainable) that the toiling millions of all nations groan. Give them the Truth—the Truth which Christ bequeathed to them by his dying Testament—and this Truth shall make them free! It will relieve them from that weight of multiplying evils from which they suffer—no less to their detriment, and the detriment of all true progress, than to our disgrace.

Is there no Luther among us to commence and carry forward to a successful issue this holy war—this crusade of Love—against this Atheism, whether open or disguised, from which so many anomalies, so many Evils—spiritual and material—flow?—no bold spirit ready to give what he *has*, and what is in him, to the Poor; take up his cross, and follow his beloved master in this his mission of peace and love to all humanity, and thus to work a second and a greater Reformation for the Christian world?

It was to suggest this step, and ask these questions, that I selected the Gospel-texts to elucidate and comment upon, which occupied our attention for a brief space recently, and now I have detained you long,—*too long* if my suggestions do not lead to some result. Never was the time more ripe and fitting for the work of a great moral revolution,—a wide-spread and lasting Reformation.

Is it that the spirit *sleeps*? Is it that the half-empty

churches chill? It cannot be that we doubt the Gospel's Truth! It *cannot* be that we are luke-warm in our divine exemplar's cause! I trust it is that the sacred fire of Christian love *but smoulders in us*, and that a spark will some day set it in a blaze to light with its holy flame the spiritual darkness of the land!

I would to God I could emit that spark, and set some Luther's spirit all ablaze; and compel him to the holy work—for God's true honour and for the welfare and progress of all Humanity! I think I hear his exemplar's greeting when the work is done!—to him, and to each of us, his helpers—“Well done thou good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

THE MILLENNIUM, AND HOW TO OBTAIN IT.

“They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.”—MICAH iv. 4.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—A WISE nation is a RELIGIOUS nation: and no nation is really religious that is not manifestly happy.—In the morning of the world, long before religion had been reduced into its simple elements of love to God, and love to all humanity, long before these simple elements of Christianity were perceived to be the pure principles of true Wisdom, the happiness of a people was seen to be the result of the wisdom employed in the frame-work and administration of its Laws. This wisdom was not then recognised as religion: the time was not ripe for the knowledge. But in so far as this wisdom was based on righteousness—on just “Judgement” between man and man—it *was* Religion, and produced its natural, happiness-affording consequences. We read in the third chapter of the first Book of “Kings” that, “In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: And God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And
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Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy according as he walked before Thee in Truth and in Righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with Thee; and Thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, Thou hast made Thy servant King instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And Thy servant is in the midst of THY people which Thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart, to judge THY people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this THY so great a people?" It is especially worthy of remark here that Solomon does not (with that empty arrogance which is as unseemly as it is absurd) speak of the people as "my people;" but as *God's* people. "And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgement; behold, I have done according to thy words; lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast *not* asked, both riches and honors, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days." This, you will remember, was a *dream*; but dream though it was, it was the embodiment of the youthful

Solomon's waking *desire* to obtain knowledge that he might "discern between good and bad" in the government which had just devolved upon him,—a knowledge that might enable him to wield the sceptre in Righteousness over the people. The desire of the day resulted in the dream of the night; and in turn, the dream of the night exercised a potent influence over the desire of the day, until the dream was realized, for in the next chapter we read that—"Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men,—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the Sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." And under the reign of this wise King we learn (and in the Chapter that tells us of his wisdom) that "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."

You will observe, my friends, that these words of the historian, so graphically descriptive of the social condition of the people of "Judah and Israel" under Solomon, are words nearly identical with those employed three centuries afterwards by the prophet Micah, to describe the social condition of men in some distant future, which he denomi-

nates "the last days." The first is *a matter of history*,—*was* a matter of history *when Micah wrote*. The latter is a *prediction*. Concerning the same distant and undefined future, Isaiah also (who is said to have been contemporary with Micah) promulgated a similar prediction.

The words of Isaiah (Chap. 2nd, vrs. 2, 3, and 4,) are these,—

"2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.

"3. And many people shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

"4. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

And these are Micah's words (Micah 4th Chap. vrs. 1, 2, and 3):—

"1. But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it.

"2. And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and

we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

“3. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

These words of MICAH are a mere echo of Isaiah's, and can scarcely be the result of *coincidence*; but what Micah adds thereto—thus completing Isaiah's picture of a second earthly Eden—is certainly adapted from the account I have read to you out of the First Book of Kings, namely, “But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.” This addition (which adds the idea of *plenteousness* and personal independence to that of *peace*) *perfects* Isaiah's picture of the time which shall be, as well as renders it *identical* in character with the condition of the people under the righteous rule of Solomon,—for in all the reign of Solomon there *was no War*, but on the contrary, there was for “*every man, personal independence, security, plenteousness, and peace.*” And the people were not *few*, not a mere family of a few thousands, they were *two large nations*—for they could not “be numbered nor counted for multitude.”

And here, my friends, this deeply interesting *question* presents itself,—was it not a knowledge of these facts that prompted the prophet of a later period to *infer what SHALL BE* from what *actually HAD BEEN*, and which, together with a knowledge of the righteous government that led thereto, *inspired the prediction*, that in some distant period of the

world's history, the time *shall* come when ALL Nations, living in accordance with the equitable laws of God, (like the Jews under Solomon,) shall enjoy the abundance of nature's blessings, and all of them be happy? It would seem so; and how nobly these prophets, standing apart both from priest and people, labored to uproot their superstitions, and to reform their religion! How they thundered their anathemas against the ruling powers beneath whose tyranny and injustice the people groaned, whilst (generation after generation) multitudes of them were "perishing for lack of Knowledge!" It would, indeed, seem so,—for *this* was the burden of their cry to the people—Away with your idolatries and superstitions—your new-moons, and fastings, and sacrifices, and solemn meetings,—away with such a mockery of Religion: Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow: Hath not God Himself showed thee, O man, what is good? Hath He not declared unto you His thoughts? "for what doth the Lord require of Thee," says Micah, (anticipating by eight centuries the whole teaching of Christ) "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to *do justly*, and to *love mercy*, and to *walk humbly with thy God!*"

It cannot, therefore, I think, be doubted that it was solely from a recognition and remembrance of the *cause* of this singular state of happiness of the historic period which had preceded the prophecy, that this predication of a *general millennium* was, both by Isaiah and Micah, so confidently uttered, and (for the benefit of all later times) so carefully recorded and preserved; for it was based on the knowledge that Solomon had ruled thus happily by means of his

Wisdom, and in consequence of the *righteousness* (flowing out of that wisdom) with which he "judged" the people,—that righteousness which brings plenteousness and peacefulness in its train,—that comes with healing on its wings—the only balm of Gilead that can cleanse the soul of sins, and heal the misery of nations!

This prophecy of Micah is, then, clearly founded on what was known to have actually taken place under Solomon as recorded in our sacred history of the Jewish people. On the same principle of *judging*, and founding our prediction on the *same historic basis*, we can prophesy, as Micah did, and Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Hosea, and Malachi, and the rest of the prophets. We know by experience, as they did perhaps by inspiration, that "if men sow the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind;" and that, if our priests and rulers teach the *Truth* and enjoin *righteousness* on a *willing people*, the old result (which is the natural result) will follow; and, as of yore, "every man shall sit under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." Thus then, knowing that the civil and social Laws of a people must even be the reflex of the Religion which appertains among them, the fiercest denunciations of the Jewish prophets were almost always levelled at the priests. If a nation serves Mammon instead of God, it is the teachers of the religion of that nation who are the great delinquents; and therefore the prophets of the Jewish nation held *them* responsible for the nation's sins. The prophet Hosea, speaking in the name of God to the children of Israel (his contemporaries), who had sunk into gross sinfulness since the days of Solomon, thus addresses them:—

"The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Yet, let no man strive (against) nor reprove another; for the people are as they that strive with the priest." Then, addressing the priest, God is made to say—"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because thou hast rejected knowledge I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing that thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will forget thy children. . . . And there shall be *like people*, like Priest." "Like people, like priest" it has always been; the one ever *is*, and ever must be, the reflex and likeness of the other. What the priesthood *teach men, that they are.*

On the priesthood, therefore,—on the recognised Teachers of the religion of a nation, the progress (or otherwise) of that nation in Truth and Righteousness must always mainly depend. If the people prefer atheism to the theism of the priests, ten to one but the theism of the priesthood is *nothing better* than atheism in disguise, and the atheism of the people, *nothing worse* than the undeveloped theism which is *natural to humanity* struggling for recognition and utterance in their souls. Of *such atheism among THE PEOPLE, here in England*, I believe there is a large abundance; and of *such theism*, a still larger proportionate abundance *among the priests*. In any case how awful the responsibility of the priesthood! *Woe* unto them if they preach not the truth!

Now, my friends, hath not God, think you, a controversy

with *this* land also, as He had with Judea in the days of old? Are there no nooks and corners in christian England—yea, and in christian America, and in christian Germany, and in christian Italy, and in christian Spain and France—where there is no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God, discoverable among the people?—where “swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and most unchristian abominations, break out; and where blood toucheth blood?” Are not multitudes of men everywhere still being “destroyed for lack of Knowledge,”—of that very knowledge which the priesthood ought to impart to them; and all because the priesthood “reject” and hate *knowledge*, and have *forgotten the Law of God*? Certain it is that, to the extent that the people are poor, and ignorant and degraded, and criminal, and God-denying, and unhappy, the priestly orders are neglecting their duty, or doing it badly, and are, in the sight of Heaven, responsible for the consequences. God has rejected them: they are no priests to Him. In the days when Solomon reigned over Judah and Israel the people were happy; they served God and respected each other; they lived together as *brethren* and in *peace*; and every man was possessed of the needful abundance. It is a fact of *history*, of *sacred history*; and I have read to you the brief, but ample record. The sacred historian has portrayed this primitive people’s happiness in a single sentence—“Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.” There were neither *lords* nor lackeys THEN. There were no outcasts, no beggars, no thieves; no hands reeking with a brother’s blood; no magistrates, no policemen,

no hangmen, no gaols for criminals, nor prisons for the poor. And, once again, why all this? Because Solomon, who was (in effect) both priest and king, ruled that state of his "which could not be counted for multitude," in *Love-producing* Righteousness, and (sumptuous as was his own mode of living) caused the true spirit of Brotherhood, and God's great law of Equity, to be revered and practised by all the people. This also is a fact of sacred history, of which I have read to you the holy and instructive record. Give *all* nations the same kind of government and teaching *now*, and *all* the nations would rejoice in the same, or precisely similar *results*. When Solomon had been "gathered to his fathers," this state of brotherhood and blessedness soon passed away, and no wonder; for Solomon was the sole possessor of the knowledge through which the beauty of Equity is seen and understood, and out of which that Wisdom, which is in harmony with God's law, proceeds. In a few centuries the untaught people, not being each of them a law to himself, but depending on guidance from without, became obnoxious to the laconic and pithy description by which Micah characterised the state of Godlessness and degeneracy they had fallen into—"Like people like priest." Their happiness had vanished; and *that* forgetfulness of God and wide-spread misery took its place which called down on the priesthood those bitter denunciations by the prophets, of which (as we know) the prescient rhapsodies of these holy men are full,—a state of things which ultimately overthrew their nation, made their very name a byword among men, and their city of Jerusalem a desolation.

But, as I have said, the remembrance of what *had* been associated in their minds with an unconquerable faith in the power of truth and right, inspired these few obscure Seers of Israel, the prophets, to declare authoritatively, and in the name of God, that there shall be a future for men on earth when God's laws of Beneficence and Equity shall be universally triumphant, and all the nations shall be one peaceful brotherhood, and all mankind be happy,—happy, because living as the brethren of one household, the children of One Father, the equal object of that Father's love,—happy, because the dispensers of happiness,—happy, because unselfish, and intelligent, and just, and good!

I am afraid the priestly orders of our day have no belief in the prediction. But certain it is, I think, that only a united and righteous Priesthood (or England's free Press, could it be wrought upon to do the work of the priesthood) can bring this state of things to pass. Knowledge must be the lever used. Nor is there any process of teaching that can be employed successfully to accomplish the mighty change, but to tell the simple, honest, Truth (stripped of all pious cant and delusive ambiguities) about religion. Every man must be regarded as a *brother*, and must be educated on the basis of the Laws of God as taught by that descendant of Solomon, of whom it was well said during his ministry on earth, "Lo, a greater than Solomon is here!"—I mean, of course, Jesus of Nazareth, whose simple religion is sufficient to make every man "a law to himself;" a lover and practiser of equity,—owning no religion but that which inspires reverence to the All-Father, and to God's children, the wide world over—LOVE.

Sometime, my friends—though when I know not—the whole People must be invited to a marriage-feast in honor of the union of Reason and Religion (making the two One;) and whether the great lords and wealthy money-changers will come in or not, care must be taken that the *Poor* shall be there, and the Ignorant, and the Halt, and the Blind. By the magic potency of sweet persuasion, *all* must be “compelled to come in.” And there shall be no lack of *wine*; for the *Spirit of Jesus* shall be there, and the “water shall blush” as it did in Galilee.

Whilst there are partial laws, and social misery in the world, the ministers of Christ's religion will have work to do; and if those men who put their hand to the plough falter or grow weary, or look back so long as a vestige of priestly, or political, or social Injustice remains, such men are not fit for their office, and must not claim to be disciples of Christ. Whatever might be the best method of bringing this unity among religious teachers about, *united* they must be (or farewell to the Millennium!)—united at least in *this*,—they must determine (whatever *forms* of public worship might seem meet to them) that the religion of their All-loving Master shall be honestly and religiously *acted out*. They must no longer make the vain attempt to reconcile the service of the Mammon of unrighteousness with the service of the All-Righteous God. In brief, whatever becomes of the christian religion, they must preach, fearlessly and honestly, the religion of Christ. This means, they must recognise *all men* as God's children, and so educate their minds, and civilise their actions, and spiritualise their thoughts, that all shall be fitted to mingle

in the social intercourse, and participate in the sweet amenities, of a truly civilised life.

But, my friends, if only the professional ministers of religion can accomplish these things, you will expect to be informed why I am urging all these particulars on *you*. Let me tell you. First, because, if Christ's religion really comprehends, and was intended to bring about, a radical reformation of Society, it is fit that the humblest person here should be made aware of it; for not to know it is to be unacquainted with a momentous fact; and *not to DESIRE the reformation* suggests a doubt whether we are what we think ourselves—*Christians*: for if we do not love the least loveable of our neighbours to the extent (at least) of *desiring* all the good possible to them—especially all the good we ourselves enjoy—we clearly violate (of the two great commandments) the *second in order*, but the *first in importance* (because it practically includes the other)—“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” You will remember what Jesus said to the scribe who questioned him, concerning these same two laws or commandments, as related in the 14th Chapter of Mark! Apparently taking this scribe's ready acquiescence in these laws as a proof of his *desire* to fulfil them, he said unto him, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” But, if he had denied the sacredness and validity of these laws, or had declared his disinclination to practise them, this scribe would have been placed by Jesus at a far greater distance from heaven: hence we learn that,—to *acquiesce* in this doctrine (as the scribe did—as *we* do,)—that is, to be *sentimentally religious*, is *something*;—we are on the *way* to heaven—are, perhaps,

near to it; but, as Jesus elsewhere informs us, it is only the *doer*, the *practical worker* out of his religion, that shall arrive safely, and find the gate of the heavenly mansions open to receive him.

I have spoken of the *responsibility* incurred by *ministers*, who, (forgetting, or denying that these two laws contain the whole of religion) never preach them, but ~~preach something~~ else in their stead: therefore, my second reason for urging all these considerations on *you* is this,—if the false or neglectful minister incurs a great responsibility,—with the Bible in our hands and claiming the right to judge of it for ourselves—we are really our own ministers, and incur a responsibility scarcely less great than theirs, and it is surely meet that we should not overlook the fact. Indeed, to the extent of our ability (if we be *really* Christians,) we must minister to *others*—*preach* to them sometimes, at least in our own household; and, on fit occasions, to our acquaintances and friends. *We* have, therefore, large responsibilities; and the progress of true religion is (more or less) accelerated or retarded, not only by the accredited ministers of religion, but *by us*. And although it is *hard* for us, nay *impossible* (under present circumstances and with all the world against us) to *act out* our religion, the *desire* to do so will become easy enough if we but habituate ourselves to regard our servants, and our poorer neighbours, and the ignorant, and the degraded, and the unfortunate of our species everywhere, as our brethren and sisters *indeed*,—giving to all of them our pity, and some few our help—if not in “wine or oil,” in sympathy and in encouraging and kindly words. Thus, my friends, we may gratify and educate

our *Christian feelings*, if nothing more; but most probably we shall inculcate and cherish these feelings *in others*, and ultimately find out the way to teach this religion, *wholesale*, to the POOR; and *by these means* accelerate the period when it will be less, and ever less, difficult for men to perform their christian duties, until all difficulties have vanished, and the predicted reign of Love and Equity shall have come.

• If you concur with me thus far, my dear friends, for I am no imperious dictator, no dogmatic declaimer, desiring to take the citadel of your feelings by storm—if you concur with me thus far, YOU, *at least*, will not join in the general cry of the army of respectables, with the priests and rulers at their head, that this literal view of the religion of Jesus is all a mistake, a Utopian dream; that it is not fit for our modern drawing-room civilization, and ought to be voted a bore; that, it might be all very well for a nation of Hottentots, but never could have been intended for men who go nightly to the opera, and imbibe choice wines with their guests, whilst they talk over the dreadful sinfulness of music-halls, and sabbath-breaking excursion-trains, and the shocking intemperance of the poor. You will *not*, I think, join with those respectable christians in declaring that a christianity like this is too vulgar for anything,—that it was tried by the early christians, and that *it would not do*.

As well might it be said (and it is said) that Republicanism has been tried in America and has failed,—that the very idea is utopian, and its establishment a mistake. The *form* has been tried, but without the men! It has been a “Republic” without republicans! I doubt if there are a

score of *republicans* between Mexico and New York. I may not venture to guess (but Heaven knows) how small a number of *christians* there are in "christendom!" But, this I know, there can be no republic without christians.

Christ's religion utopian! Undesirable! Impossible! A mistake! But, alas! *is* the hope I entertain of a practical christianity really nothing more than a utopian dream, a delusive theory, a misapprehension of sacred history, an erroneous view of the meaning of the prophets, a gross misinterpretation of the plain and simple words of Jesus of Nazareth whom *orthodoxy* believes to have been the Deity incarnate, and whom we are wont to denominate "The Christ?" Did HE, INDEED, like some juggling fiend—

"But palter with us in a *double sense*,
Holding the word of promise to the ear
Only to break it to the heart?"

Dead indeed must be that being who dares to answer, *Yes*—dead to reason, to righteousness and all spiritual life: a being who but lives to perish, and in perishing, reaps in its stunted and remorseful soul the ages of self-inflicted torture that such wilful, godless, materialism must inevitably beget.

Christ's religion utopian! Undesirable. Impossible! A Mistake!

Impossible? Most things *seem* impossible till we know how to do them. *Most of the marvels of science* we should pronounce *impossible* until the things were done. There was in the world's fair at South Kensington a machine for writing distinctly and perfectly in letters and characters so

incomprehensibly minute that every word of the Bible can be compressed into a smaller space than the palm of an infant's hand; and by the aid of the microscope (an instrument of man's invention) every word of it might be read. Man is a very teachable creature, and can *do* very many marvellous things!

We know how to render the opaquest rock transparent. We could spin London bridge into shining threads as fine as camel's hair; and we could weave them into glistening garments that the Cleopatras and Queen Shebas of the earth might be proud to wear. See through a stone wall? Yes, and travel *with the eye*, by means of the pair or two of lenses we could make out of it, up trillions of miles into the heavens, and soar from universe to universe among the stars. Can a Copernicus teach us this? and cannot this Copernicus be taught to be a christian? Would the sun refuse to rise if a bishop could be persuaded *really* to mete out the same measure of justice and kindness to others as, in his heart of hearts, he would have others meet out to him?—or, would the good God be angry with him if he were to *preach* as well as to *practise* this doctrine for the benefit of the world? Did not Paul "*almost*" persuade Felix to become a christian? And why not *Jesus* persuade a *bishop*? And cannot an archbishop be made to comprehend that it is better not to *commit* the sin this christian rule is able to guard us against—better and more religious—than to pray and pray to be forgiven for our sinfulness, and still go on, as usual, *sinning*—ever sinning, and then balancing the account with prayer?

Why, *less than half* the expenditure of wit and ingenuity

that it cost the monks of old to make our crabbed Salvation-schemes; and less than a *hundredth part* of that which it takes (and vainly takes) to make mankind *believe* in them, would be sufficient, and more than sufficient, to enable our 40,000 ministers of the Gospel (were they so minded) to make this England of ours a model nation for the benefit and example of a wondering world,—a nation *really believing* in the Bible it professes to reverence!—a nation *literally acting out* the christianity it professes to love! A nation without policemen, and lawyers, and lunatics, and beggars, and thieves! A nation, with here and there (kept up to gratify the antiquarian, or as so many undismantled monuments of what England *was*, but *is* no longer)—a nation, I say, with here and there a gaol without an inmate; a bedlam without a lunatic; a union workhouse without a single pauper in any of its dreary cells! This would be a sight *indeed* to which to invite the nations! And cannot 40,000 of the best intellects of England shew the world such a model nation in this the nineteenth century after the founder of the beautiful religion (which is *capable* of all this) lived meanly, and died wretchedly, on purpose to shew them the way? Shame on them if they cannot! Woe betide them if they will not! A world of eternal blessings on them if they do! For then, and not till then, shall come again the period—not to cease any more for ever—when, in the figurative description of the good, humanity-loving, prophet of yore, “they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.”

May the blessed time come quickly! May the All-

loving Father, in whom these ancient prophets believed, incline the minds and hearts of our ministers of every denomination in the land to commence this elevating and holy work, and crown with gradual but sure success their world uplifting labors!

THE END.











